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To the Brink of Empire: Rusk, Kissinger,and the Transformation of American Foreign Policy

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To the Brink of Empire: Rusk Kissinger and the Transformation of American Foreign Policy.

In July 1965, Lyndon Johnson committed the United States to the ground war in Vietnam. This thesis argues that the 1965 decision marks a turning point in American foreign policy by creating a near Machiavellian Moment for the United States characterised by the question of Republic or Empire? To understand how the near Machiavellian Moment changed American foreign policy, this thesis compares and contrasts Dean Rusk and Henry Kissinger. They will be compared and contrasted by asking three general questions. How did they view the United States? How did they view the World? How did they view the United States' role in the world?

Dean Rusk represents a pre-Machiavellian Moment figure. His foreign policy philosophy of liberal internationalism reflects a belief in America's exceptionalism. Rusk justified the war by arguing that the United States' commitment to a decent world order was under threat in South Vietnam. Lyndon Johnson represents the Machiavellian Moment figure. He was caught between the international system, the commitment to a decent world order, and the domestic sphere, a commitment to deliver America's promise to all citizens. To overcome the dilemma, Johnson attempted to wage war and carry out reforms simultaneously. The decision created an imbalance at the heart of the Republic. The imbalance within the American regime and between the American regime and the international system brought the United States to the brink of Empire. Henry Kissinger represents a post-Machiavellian Moment figure. He rejected Rusk's foreign policy universalism. For him, the United States is a "normal" country that pursues a limited foreign policy based upon *realpolitik*. Rather than seeking to reform the international system, Kissinger sought to manage it.

The thesis concludes that Rusk and Kissinger and their foreign policy alternatives represent the inherent tension between the American regime and the international system it supports.

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Chapter One: Vietnam and the Crisis of the Republic.

On 28 July 1965, President Lyndon Johnson announced the deployment of fifty thousand combat troops to Vietnam.[1] That decision sealed the United States' involvement in the Vietnam war. After Diem's assassination in 1963, the United States had accepted a greater share of responsibility for South Vietnam.[2] In 1965, in the midst of a military crisis in South Vietnam, the United States assumed a greater role in the military fate of South Vietnam. Within three years, Johnson would send over five-hundred thousand troops to fulfil that responsibility. Johnson's commitment not only changed the face of the war, but it changed the underlying structure of the United States' foreign policy. No other decision of the war had a greater impact on the overall course of American foreign policy. The decision and its outcome would unleash powerful and far reaching criticism of Johnson's foreign policy, but also the underlying foreign policy philosophy, known generally as liberal internationalism. The criticism and the intractable problems of Vietnam, demonstrated by the 1968 Tet offensive, led Johnson to withdraw from the 1968 presidential election.

The policy makers behind Johnson's foreign policy suffered similar criticism and rejection, especially after they left office. In particular, Dean Rusk, the administration's main defender of the United States' commitment to Vietnam and to liberal internationalism, suffered severe criticism. Critics called the Vietnam war, Dean Rusk's war.[3] Unfortunately, the failure in Vietnam overshadowed Rusk and Johnson's other foreign policy accomplishments. Johnson's foreign policy, on the whole, was not a failure, but this basic competency went unrecognised because of the foreign policy failure in Vietnam overshadowed everything else. The United States' foreign policy failure there called into question the underlying assumptions and philosophy supporting its cold war strategy. The American public, tired of a long war waged for seemingly indeterminate objectives, challenged the assumptions behind the intervention. The public's challenge reflected a larger crisis of confidence in the United States' role in the world. The problems within foreign policy intensified domestic problems. Johnson failed to solve the Vietnam

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[1] Lyndon Johnson, Public Papers of the President 7/28/65 address pp. 794-803.
[2] For an interesting view of the United States' Vietnam policy between 1963 and 1965, see Fredrik Logevall, Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).
[3] Martin Viorst, "Incidentally, Who is Dean Rusk?," Esquire, April 1968, p.98.

"problem" and the war undermined both his foreign and domestic policies. The Vietnam war created a crisis of confidence within the United States. The crisis of confidence and the challenges to the foreign policy assumptions contributed to making the 1960s a decade of transition in American foreign policy. The crisis of confidence and the uncertainty over the United States' foreign policy helped Richard Nixon's to win the 1968 presidential election.[4]

To counter the United States' loss of confidence, Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger knew that they had to extract the United States from Vietnam. Nixon arrived in Washington with a plan, at the time unspecified, to end the United States' involvement in the war and readjust the United States foreign policy. To accomplish that goal, they changed the direction of American foreign policy and reversed Johnson's decision to commit troops.[5] In effect, Nixon and Kissinger replaced a foreign policy based upon a commitment to global containment with a foreign policy based upon the limits of power. Their foreign policy philosophy stressed the limits of the United States' power to shape the international system. They viewed the international system through a lens of realpolitik that replaced the previous administration's foreign policy philosophy of liberal internationalism. Nixon and Kissinger's foreign policy would avoid commitments based upon the philosophical promises of the United States' political ideals. They wanted to avoid engaging the United States constrained power in any policies fuelled by ideological concerns. While the policy of détente with the Soviet Union characterised the Nixon and Kissinger foreign policy framework, this policy was not an immediate or obvious break with the past. The policy that represented the largest break with the previous administration was the Nixon Doctrine. Lloyd Gardner argues that the Nixon Doctrine demonstrated that America would never again commit ground troops to a war in that region.[6] Moreover, the Nixon Doctrine was designed to keep the United States from being caught up in an another ideological crusade like Vietnam.

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[4]Harry W. Brands, The Wages of Globalism: Lyndon Johnson and the limits of American power (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) argues that Johnson foreign policy, aside from Vietnam, was successful. For a contrary view see John Lewis Gaddis, Strategies of Containment: a critical appraisal of postwar American national security policy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

[5]Lloyd Gardner, Pay any Price: Lyndon Johnson and the Wars for Vietnam (London: Ivan Dees, 1995) p. 541. Gardner argues that in rejecting Johnson's policy of involvement, Nixon and Kissinger were acting on an understanding of the limits of American power. The limits of American power was a key consideration in both the Nixon doctrine and the policy of Détente.

[6]Ibid.

The Nixon Doctrine stated that there were now limits to America's commitments. Unlike the expansive promises made by Kennedy to bear any burden and pay any price, the Nixon Doctrine was a stark admission of the limits of American power. In less than ten years, the United States had gone from a power willing to defend liberty anywhere, to a power willing to do so only in response to a threat by a nuclear power.

This thesis seeks to explain how and why the underlying philosophy of American foreign policy changed from one based upon liberal internationalism to one based upon a more pragmatic policy based on realpolitik. The changed foreign policy reflects more than a change in administrations but reflects a wholesale shift in how the United States viewed itself and its role in the world. In part, the thesis follows the conventional view that the main cause for this change was the decision, and its failure, to commit United States' ground troops to the Vietnam War. The decision and its failure represented the apex and the nadir of the foreign policy philosophy, liberal internationalism, that was invoked to justify intervention. According to Dean Rusk, the United States was fighting a war to defend and maintain a liberal world order. Yet, that effort failed which undermined the philosophy of liberal internationalism. Instead of the traditional view that the United States' foreign policy was changed by the United States' failure in defending South Vietnam, this thesis makes a more radical claim by arguing that the war, the 28 July 1965 decision, brought the United States to the brink of empire, to the brink of a Machiavellian Moment. While the United States did not consciously set out to become an empire, it pursued policies at home and abroad that pointed away from the republic toward empire.[7]

Empire can be roughly defined as the rule of one state over another. An empire is often characterised by the rule of one man. In Rome this development was demonstrated in the last days of the republic and the emergence of the empire. Caesar, and the subsequent emperors, eclipsed the Senate. An empire, in its attempts to expand, exports its domestic political principles into a universal system. This thesis argues that the increased power of the president and the increased

[7] In an interesting parallel the influence of William Appleman Williams' The Tragedy of American Diplomacy which is critical of the United States' expansionist policies corresponds with America's involvement in Vietnam. As Bradford Perkins points out in a review essay on the book's influence twenty-five years after it was first published, the book was influential between 1959 and 1975. These years correspond , roughly, to the United States' involvement in South Vietnam. See Bradford Perkins "The Tragedy of American Diplomacy: Twenty-Five Years After," Reviews in American History 12, no. 1. (March, 1984): 1-18.

centralisation of power to the federal government after 1945 contains the intimation that the rule of one man is a possibility within the American political system. While the rule of one man is not a threat, the danger is that the increased powers of the president shift the balance of power in the federal government.[8] The balance of power between the President and the Congress was shifted dramatically towards the presidency during Johnson's presidency. In terms of foreign policy, the Gulf of Tonkin resolution represents perhaps the high-water mark of the president's prerogative powers. This event reflects the fact that the president's powers have increased as the United States' foreign policy responsibilities have increased since the end of World War Two. The American constitution is a unitary document, in which there is no distinction in the powers granted at home or those granted abroad. The increase of presidential powers for foreign policy reasons has had an effect on the domestic arena.[9] Even though the legislative branch consented to these changes, their consent was based in large part on the Cold War crisis and the technical requirements for an efficient nuclear deterrent. These changes reflected the growing imbalance of power between the President and the Congress based upon the President's power in foreign affairs after World War Two.[10]

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[8] See for example, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay The Federalist Or the New Constitution ed. Max Beloff (Oxford: Blackwell, 1948) nos. 48 and 67.

[9] Gordon Silverstein, Imbalance of Powers: Constitutional Interpretation and the Making of American Foreign Policy (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1997). p.25-30 Silverstein emphasises the rise of the executive prerogative after World War Two to explain the imbalance between the Executive and the Legislative branches. His analysis depends largely upon the belief that the constitution must be read as a unitary document so that powers granted in foreign policy work in domestic policy. This interpretation runs counter to the interpretation presented by George Sutherland, which focused on natural rights and would read the constitution differently in foreign affairs than in domestic affairs. For an alternative view of the question, see Hadley Arkes, The Return of George Sutherland: Restoring a Jurisprudence of Natural Rights (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

[10] Ibid. While Silverstein does not develop an argument about empire, he does discuss the rise of the "imperial presidency" by exploring the rise of Presidential prerogative especially in matters of foreign policy and how that has led to an increase in the presidents powers. He argues that since 1945 the Congress has given more and more power to the president in foreign policy and because of the constitutional interpretations that have coincided with the transfer of powers to the president has created an imbalance of power. My argument focuses on the changes in foreign policy philosophy, rather than the constitutional questions involved, that reflect a drift towards empire. One characteristic of an empire is the centralisation of power. In the Roman empire, the emperor had eclipsed the Senate. In this regard, I follow Silverstein's argument that the foreign policy excesses of the president have tremendous consequences for the domestic politics. He discusses the constitutional implications of the changed constitutional interpretations of the President's foreign policy powers. One could also add that the drift towards centralisation and the imbalance within the American regime stems, in part, from a failure to understand how natural rights shape the United States Constitution. On this question see Arkes, The Return of George Sutherland, 1994.

The empire's desire to spread its political principles can be seen in a specific sense in the United States' involvement in Vietnam. While the United States was not trying to export an exact duplicate of its domestic principles, it was waging this war to defend a liberal world order it had helped to found. In Vietnam, this identification with the international system led the United States to view its security as bound up with the security of the UN world order. If South Vietnam were to fall to the communists, it would threaten the world order that the United States was trying to maintain and defend. The identification with the world order, which required the United States to wage war in its defence, and the increase in the president's power brought the United States to the brink of empire. The brink of empire was at the philosophical level not at the practical level. The senate was not in danger of being eclipsed by Lyndon Johnson nor was the Constitution in danger. However, an imbalance within the American regime was developing because of the Vietnam War. The United States' foreign policy was having a dramatic and important effect on the domestic structure. The interaction of these two realms and how the United States viewed itself and its world role brought it to the brink of empire. To understand the philosophical point and to give it analytical focus, the thesis suggests that the United States faced, on 28 July 1965, in the words of J.G.A. Pocock, a Machiavellian Moment.[11].

The Machiavellian Moment.

The term Machiavellian moment, coined by J.G.A. Pocock, refers to a condition faced by republics at some point in their existence. According to Pocock, a republic's political principles are universal but they are bounded by the limits of citizenship. As a result of this bounded universality, a republican political regime is fragile because it faces internal and external pressures. These take the form of corruption that might cause collapse, dangers within, and the temptation to expand to fight off external dangers, dangers without. The republic must continually work to keep the internal structure stable in face of these pressures.

> The Machiavellian moment denotes the problem itself. It is a name for the moment in conceptualized time in which the republic was seen as confronting its own temporal finitude, as

[11] J.G.A. Pocock, The Machiavellian moment : Florentine political thought and the Atlantic republican tradition (Princeton (N.J.): Princeton U.P., 1975) p. viii. See also J.G.A. Pocock, "*The Machiavellian Moment* Revisited: A Study in History and Ideology," Journal of Modern History 53 (March 1981): 49-72.

> attempting to remain morally and political stable in a stream of irrational events conceived as essentially destructive of all systems of secular stability.[12]

The Machiavellian Moment occurs when a republic becomes aware of its limits in the temporal world and must act to either reform itself or disintegrate. A republic continually faces the possibility of this moment, but the danger is not in everyday decisions, but in the gradual transformation in response to internal and external challenges. The danger is ever present because the republic is an attempt to limit, within a political space, universal values.

> It [A republic] was at once universal in the sense that it existed to realise for its citizens all the values which men were capable of realizing in this life, and particular, in the sense that it was finite and located in space and time.....[T]he problem of showing how it had come into being and might maintain its existence, and that of reconciling its end of realizing universal values with the instability and circumstantial disorder of its temporal life.[13]

A major source of pressure is the desire to externalise the universal values bound up within the republic. The universal principles are bounded, but as universals they constantly press against the constitutional and political structural boundaries. To put it slightly differently, the pressure is to expand the domestic political sphere and if the republic acceded to this pressure, it would remove the limits that make it a republic. It would be on its way to becoming an empire. An empire, in contrast to a republic, never faces the Machiavellian Moment. An empire is not a bounded intellectual entity. It possesses an ideal that is already universal and the question of expansion has already been decided. The only limits to an empire are physical not philosophical. An empire maintains its stability by maintaining the universality of its system, it may face adjustments within its structure, but these are changes in degree not of kind. Inherent in a republic's foundation, because it is a delimited idea based upon the idea of citizenship, is a belief in the intrinsic philosophical limits to the political sphere. In practical political terms, territorial expansion by an empire is not a cause to reassess its philosophical justification as it is for a republic. At the political philosophical level of its founding principles, a republic is aware of its limits in power, space, and time. An empire does not recognise these limits because its founding principles are universal.

As a universal idea, an empire perceives itself as immortal because it knows no limit to its political sphere. An empire is always expanding and even a pause in its expansion does not

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[12]Ibid.

[13] Pocock, Machiavellian, p. 3.

invalidate its universal idea. An empire does not recognise the temporal limits that a republic confronts. Immortality in this context means that an empire is not founded with an understanding of its potential demise or its inherent fragility. It is not trying to maintain itself within a limited particularity and therefore does not need to display or rely upon political self-restraint. An empire faces the problem of collapse but not the transformation from its universality into particularity. A republic faces two slightly different problems because of the universality of its central values. The first problem is that these values can be corrupted if the self-restraint that contains them is lost. If a republic's basis for citizenship changed, if citizenship no longer requires the exercise of virtue, the virtue required to maintain the republic's self-restraint and contain the universalism within it, then the republic will change. The corruption of republican virtue becomes an important theme because republican leaders must find a way to maintain virtue and encourage it without imposing it. The second problem is that a republic faces external threats. One way to meet this threat is to expand the bounded universal values, but this would encourage it to become like an empire in its universality. Another threat from the external realm is that a republic may be destroyed by states that are not restrained. To meet this threat, the republic may have to change its domestic structure; accept political changes that threaten Republican virtue. The republic must watch out for external dangers and this means that its internal structure must maintain the necessary levels of republican virtue to sustain the political structure. The republic must keep the two realms in balance if it is to avoid being corrupted internally or destroyed externally.

A complete exploration of how the Machiavellian moment challenged the United States, liberalism, and American society as a result of the Vietnam war is beyond the scope of this thesis.[14] The thesis does not suggest that the United States suffered a Machiavellian Moment, but that it suffered a *near* Machiavellian Moment. The United States faced the temptation of empire, an imbalance developed between its domestic structure and its international responsibilities, but the republic did not succumb to that temptation and reasserted, in part, the balance. In this regard, the

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[14]The reasons for this are several, but the main reason is that Pocock is grappling with the question of modernity and how Republican institutions resist the contradiction inherent in modernity. The pursuit of that question and the possible crisis of American history since World War II as suggested by Wayne Nelson in his dissertation <u>Two Machiavellian Moments in Twentieth Century American Political Culture</u> (Ph.D. Diss., University of Minnesota 1986) is beyond the scope of this thesis.

thesis differs from Pocock's work by focusing on foreign policy rather than the whole republican political structure. This thesis is interested in understanding how the United States' foreign policy changed as a result of the temptation of empire. In exploring this issue, it is also interested in understanding how the United States' foreign policy manifested the reaction to the emerging imbalance between the domestic regime and the international responsibility. The thesis, therefore, has a much smaller task and uses Pocock's philosophical point as an analytical tool to explore the change in the United States' foreign policy philosophy. In addressing the theoretical point, the thesis shares Pocock's argument that the moment is not simply a single moment in time, but a continual problem. The problem is continual because it is a search for a balance between the competing forces that pull a republic to expand and push inward to renew itself. According to Pocock, the struggle reflects a republic's confrontation with modernity.[15] The republic must find limits to its political system within an era where technology creates the illusion of limitless economic progress but contains the powers of unlimited destruction. The foreign policy arena demonstrates the constant struggle by a republic, as mentioned above, to maintain the balance between remaining a republic and the ever present drift toward empire. The tension stems from the universal values that motivate the republic, an entity limited by time and space, but constantly seek to find universal expression beyond the limits of the republic. The Machiavellian Moment demonstrates the dilemma at the heart of a republic's foreign policy, but, as we shall see in chapter three, a crisis takes time to develop. For example, the apparent crisis in American foreign policy that occurs in 1965 requires nearly twenty years to arrive, lasts for three years, and another ten to be partially resolved. Therefore, what will be stressed in this thesis will be the continuities and the changes of the policies leading to and following Lyndon Johnson's fateful decision.

Why did America's foreign policy philosophy change?

A simple and direct answer to the question posed by this thesis would be to say that the Vietnam war changed American foreign policy.

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[15] Nelson, Two Machiavellian, p. 5.

> [T]he breakdown of liberalism and the disastrous war in Vietnam compelled many Americans to reexamine the Cold War. Under the impact of these events, scholars and others are questioning anticommunism, the uses of national power, and the belief in national innocence.[16]

That answer, while comfortable and immediate, does not explain how and why Vietnam occurred. To understand the change in the United States' foreign policy philosophy, the thesis will explore how and why Lyndon Johnson increased the United States' involvement in Vietnam. A related question is how the decision, a product of the period's foreign policy, transcended the immediate foreign policy context to transform the United States' foreign policy philosophy. The decision created an imbalance within the United States between the domestic regime and the international responsibilities. The thesis places the decision in a philosophical context to explore how the philosophy underpinning the foreign policy, the essential cold war assumptions, changed. The level of analysis, therefore, will not be the diplomatic history of the decision because there already exist several excellent histories of that decision.[17] What will be attempted is a philosophical analysis of how the decision to commit troops transformed the United States' foreign policy by challenging the philosophy underpinning it. The thesis concentrates on the philosophy that supported the foreign policy, liberal internationalism, and created the foreign policy milieu for Johnson's decision.

In 1947, America assumed the burden of globalism under the aegis of the Truman Doctrine. From its inception, this doctrine contained the dilemma of unlimited ends and limited means. The United States' foreign policy, in the years following that announcement, avoided that dilemma. However, when Johnson decided to commit troops to Vietnam, he was influenced by the logic of the Truman Doctrine, and the United States faced the dilemma of means and ends. On a strategic level, this over commitment meant that the United States' strategic resources could not

[16]Barton Bernstein, Politics and Policies of the Truman Administration quoted in Geir Lundestad, The American "Empire": And the others studies in U.S. foreign policy in a comparative perspective (Oxford: Oxford University Press Norwegian University Press, 1990) p.15.
[17]George McT. Kahin, Intervention: How America became involved in Vietnam (New York, 1986); Brian VanDeMark, Into the Quagmire: Lyndon Johnson and the escalation of the Vietnam war (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Larry Berman, Planning a Tragedy: The Americanization of the war in Vietnam (New York: W.W. Norton Company, 1982); Yeun Foong Khong, Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

meet the chosen strategic ends.[18] On the philosophical level, the United States' involvement in Vietnam demonstrated the over-commitment to global containment.[19] On this level, the analysis focuses on how the universalism of the United States' foreign policy after World War II was based upon a certain vision of world order. This world order, based upon liberal internationalism, was expressed the United States' policy of global containment.[20] Vietnam stretched this policy, and the vision of world order to their limits.

The central argument.

The central argument in this thesis is the following. Dean Rusk is a pre-Machiavellian Moment figure, Lyndon Johnson is the Machiavellian Moment figure through his decision to commit troops, and Henry Kissinger is a post-Machiavellian Moment figure. Dean Rusk represents the foreign policy philosophy of liberal internationalism that led to decision to commit troops. The decision was guided by the belief that the United States' security was bound up with the security of the UN world order. The decision, which brought the United States to the brink of empire, forced the United States to confront an important political philosophical question, Republic or Empire?. The appearance of this choice represents the Machiavellian moment. In response to this choice and the emerging imbalance between the domestic political regime and the international responsibilities, the United States chose a more limited role. The United States rejects the universalism within the foreign policy philosophy of liberal internationalism and accepts a more limited foreign policy, based upon *realpolitik*. The post-Machiavellian Moment can be seen in Kissinger's foreign policy philosophy, a policy of *realpolitik*, which stresses the limits of power. Under Nixon and Kissinger, the United States takes a limited and less universalistic approach to its interests and how it calculates threats to those interests. The United States no longer identifies its security with the security of the UN world order and rather than seeking to reform the international

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[18]Gaddis makes this point repeatedly in Strategies of Containment and argues that Nixon and Kissinger returned American foreign policy to its original limits as suggested by Kennan's initial writings. See Gaddis, Strategies, p.308.
[19]Brands, Wages, p. v.
[20] See Patrick L. Hatcher, The Suicide of an Elite: American Internationalists and Vietnam (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990). Hatcher discusses how American internationalism, loosely understood as liberal internationalism, wrecked itself in Vietnam. On the philosophical understanding of liberal internationalism see Michael Joseph Smith "Liberalism and International Reform" in Terry Nardin and David R Mapel, eds., Traditions of International Ethics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) pp. 201-224.

system it seeks to manage it. Facing a turbulent world where the United States' power to shape the world order is demonstrably limited, Kissinger's foreign policy philosophy offers the best of a bad situation. He believes that a nation must understand the limits of its power and with that understanding, it must engage in a pragmatic policy. For Kissinger, the United States had become intoxicated with the idealism and ideology that led to Vietnam. In the aftermath of the Vietnam War, the United States had to face the future with a sober calculation of power.

The argument must not be seen as a tale of Dean Rusk leading the United States astray and Henry Kissinger applying the corrective. The situation, as we shall see, is much more complex than that initial reading. In particular, one must be aware, and this thesis hopes to show, that underpinning the policy outlook of each man was a vision of the United States and its role in the world. The tragedy of Dean Rusk, and United States foreign policy, is that by following the liberal internationalism's precepts Rusk was led to support the decision to commit the troops.[21] In contrast, Henry Kissinger had a different understanding of the United States and its role in the world and this vision of the United States led him to embrace *realpolitik*. The difference and the similarity are that each man's vision of the United States was incomplete. This incompleteness is demonstrated by Rusk's belief in a world view without fully understanding how it might create an imbalance with the domestic political regime. Kissinger, on the other hand, sought to expunge ideology from the United States' foreign policy and undervalued the strength of the United States' political ideals. Thus, Rusk over committed the United States in the pursuit and support of a liberal world order and Kissinger went to the opposite extreme in creating a stable international system. Rusk destabilised the international system by pursuing a liberal world order, while Kissinger, reacting to the destabilised international system, dismissed the United States' unique status to achieve stability in the international system. Neither man was able to develop a foreign policy that reconciled the United States to the international system.

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[21] David M. Barratt, Uncertain Warriors: Lyndon Johnson and his Vietnam advisors (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993). Barratt argues at the end of his book that the question for those trying to understand Vietnam is no longer why Vietnam?, but why not Vietnam? This point is also mentioned by George Herring in that he argues that Vietnam was the logical outcome of containment policy. George C. Herring, America's longest war : the United States and Vietnam 1950-1975 (New York: Wiley , 1979) p. x quoted in Khong, Analogies at War, p. 71.

In Vietnam, the United States faced a philosophical dilemma as it sought to defend a world order based in part upon its own political principles. The American Republic had to answer the question: Whether America was to be a republic or an empire?[22] The question, taken from the title of Robert Tucker's essay Nation or Empire?, presents the fundamental philosophical question of the Vietnam war. The United States had to decide whether it was willing to engage in an imperial role to support its foreign policy commitment to South Vietnam. That role would assure, through military action, the freedom of South Vietnam and thereby assure the conception of the international order implicit in the policy of global containment.[23] Tucker's essay explores the reasons and justification for the decision to commit United States troops in Vietnam. He argues that the United States equated its security with the continued existence of South Vietnam because to defend South Vietnam was to defend the UN world order. In doing so, the United States took on imperial characteristics because it equated its security with the stability of the world order.[24] Dean Rusk made this connection when he connected South Vietnam's security to the security of the United States and therein the security of the world order. Tucker argued that when a state begins to identify its purpose with the purpose of creating a world order that it begins to take on imperial characteristics.[25] "An imperial state, by definition, must have as its purpose the creation

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[22]This phrase is adapted from Robert W. Tucker, Nation or Empire?: the debate over American foreign policy (Baltimore (Md.): Johns Hopkins Press, 1968). Tucker's central thesis forms the starting point for this thesis. His premise, that America's commitment of troops to Vietnam and the belief that America's security was bound up with the security of Vietnam meant that America was in danger of taking on the characteristics of an empire.

[23] Charles De Gaulle suggested to Dean Rusk that America might have to undertake such a role if it was going to succeed in South Vietnam. See Gardner, Pay Any Price, p.155 This idea is explored more fully in chapter three.

[24] "There is nothing new in this insistence upon identifying America's security with here purpose. That insistence is apparent in the Truman Doctrine, which, in turn, reflects a tradition that goes back to the very origins of American diplomacy. What is new are the lengths to which the identification of security and purpose has regularly been carried out today by administration spokesmen. Nor will it do to dismiss expressions of this identification as mere rhetorical hyperbole ("We can be safe only to the extent that our total environment is safe"--Secretary of State Dean Rusk), for it is the very excessiveness of the terms in which the American security interest is presently cast that is significant and that requires explanation." Tucker, Nation or Empire, pp. 37-38.

"The defense of American foreign policy today is no longer a defense of national security and interests but of imperial security and interests. The failure to apprehend this on the part of the public and the unwillingness--perhaps partly unconscious--to acknowledge this on the part of the administration are at the root of the present public confusion and malaise." p. 53.

[25]Tucker's observations follow the work of George Liska, who, in examining Ancient empires, defines empire as the following. . "An "empire" is a state exceeding other states in size, scope, and salience, and sense of task.....The scope of its interests and involvements is coterminous with the boundaries of the system itself, rather than with a narrow security zone or habitat....Finally, the

and maintenance of order."[26] Tucker's claim forms the analytical template to examine the change from liberal internationalism to realpolitik in the United States' foreign policy. However, in important ways, this thesis diverges from Tucker.

The most identifiable characteristic of an empire, according to Tucker, is universalism. Universalism led the United States government to see its security bound up with a world order. This universalism, or globalism, had its roots in the Truman Doctrine but had antecedents in America's founding and its early debates on American foreign policy.[27] The Truman Doctrine's universalism introduces the central question, of the Machiavellian Moment, because it highlights two important elements of post-1945 American foreign policy. First, the global containment built upon universalism leads to America's commitment to South Vietnam. Second, the universalism is implicit in the domino theory put forward by President Dwight Eisenhower to explain the United States' commitment to defend states in South East Asia that were resisting communist aggression. The United States had identified its security with the world order, and therefore all threats to that world order become threats to the United States. As one part of the world order is challenged all are challenged because if one outpost falls the others are endanger.[28] Thus, the commitment to a specific world order is an important imperial characteristic.

Universalism alone does not make for empire. Even though the United States took on global responsibilities after World War II, it did not become an empire. It moved toward the brink of empire as its foreign policy responsibilities began to have increased domestic consequences. A sub-argument to the central thesis is that the president's increased powers, as a result of foreign policy responsibilities, created an imbalance of power within the American government. The apex of presidential power occurred with unilateral action to defend South Vietnam to counter a perceived threat to the United States' world order. The United States' involvement challenged the

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sense of task which distinguishes the imperial state is typically that of creating, and then maintaining, a world order the conditions and principles of which would harmonize the particular interests of the imperial state with the interests of the commonweal." Tucker, Nation or Empire, p. 9. See also, George Liska, War and Order: reflections on Vietnam and history (Baltimore, (Md.): Johns Hopkins Press, 1968).

[26] Tucker, Nation or Empire, p. 50.

[27] See for example, Richard W. Van Alstyne, The Rising American Empire (New York: Norton, 1974) pp. 1-27.

[28] A globalist foreign policy means that one has interests around the world and somewhere those interests are endangered. See Joseph A. Schumpeter, Imperialism and Social Classes trans. Heinz Norden ed. Paul M. Sweezy (Oxford: Blackwell, 1951) p. 66.

Republican principles because the United States was undertaking a war to defend globally the universal principles bounded locally within the Republic. Moreover, the foreign policy decision reflected an imbalance between the executive and legislative branches as the president relied upon his prerogative to justify his actions.[29] As mentioned earlier, the constitution is a unitary document so that the powers the president claims for foreign policy have an effect on the domestic sphere. The foreign policy problem exacerbated the domestic consequences on the constitutional balance between the executive and the legislature. Foreign policy commitments affected the domestic balance between the executive and the legislative branches of government.[30]

Tucker is correct to argue that the decision, to send ground troops to Vietnam in 1965, is the turning point. However, Tucker's analysis only hints at the what the decision fully implies. He did not appreciate the decision's full scope because he does not address the question's domestic content. Moreover, he did not explore how that decision unfolded as the United States stepped back from that imperial temptation. The answer to the question of Republic or Empire changed how the United States defined: its identity, the world, and its role in the world. Tucker is correct to argue that the decision, to send ground troops to Vietnam in 1965, is the turning point. However, Tucker's analysis only hints at the what the decision fully implies. He did not appreciate the decision's full scope because he does not address the domestic content to that question. He failed to explore how that decision unfolded as the United States stepped back from that imperial temptation. The United States' response to the challenge of Republic or Empire changed how it defined: its identity, the world, and its role in the world.

Understanding Empire.

Even though the United States did not become an empire, the danger of empire is central to the argument and therefore we should have an understanding of the term. The term empire has gained a following in American diplomatic history since some writers have chosen to characterise America's post World War II world role as "Empire by invitation." The phrase is used in comparison with the phrase "Empire by coercion" that is applied to the Soviet Union.[31] Geir

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[29] Silverstein, Imbalance, pp. 65- 122. In these pages, Silverstein shows how the Prerogative interpretation evolved.
[30] Ibid., p. 25.
[31] John Lewis Gaddis, "The Emerging Post Revisionist Synthesis on the Origins of the Cold War", Diplomatic History 7, no. 2 (Summer 1983): 171-190.

Lundestad coined the phrase and John Lewis Gaddis has used it to good effect to explain the Cold War's origins.[32] However, their usage is inaccurate because it does not capture the true meaning of empire nor does it capture the domestic changes that accompany empire. The "empire by invitation" argument suggests that the United States did not act imperialistically and thus is not an imperial power because it was invited to exert control over the European states foreign policy. Lundestad and Gaddis argue, following the work of Eric Hobsbawm, that the process of imperialism is different from the state of empire.[33] While this is true, they employ empire in a manner more akin to hegemony because hegemony denotes leadership while empire denotes coercion.

The argument presented in this thesis uses empire in the word's original sense.[34] According to Michael Doyle, empire demonstrates control over the domestic and the external policies of the states, while hegemony is only control over the external relations of the state. Thus an empire requires much more control over the subordinate states than the United States demonstrated in its leadership over Western Europe. Moreover, this does not mean that the United States pursued an informal empire since informal empire does not show a measure of equality accepted by hegemony. The United States accepted and reciprocated a higher level of equality with Western European states than it would have if it were a formal or even informal empire. Doyle's typology is more complex than the simple duality between empire and hegemony suggests. It includes the characteristics of an imperial relationship as well as how the metropole society changes after becoming an empire whereas a hegemony does not face this problem.[35] It is this latter point that is important for this thesis.

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[32]See Lundestad , American 'Empire', and Gaddis, "Emerging,".
[33] Eric J.E. Hobsbawm, The Age of Empire: 1875-1914 (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson , 1987) pp. 60-65. See also Jerome Slater "Is United States Foreign Policy "Imperialist" or "Imperial"?", Political Science Quarterly 91, no. 1 (Spring, 1976): 63-87. See also Sidney Morgenbesser, "Imperialism: Some Preliminary Distinctions," Philosophy and Public Affairs 3, no. 1 (Autumn, 1973): 3-44.
[34] Michael W. Doyle Empires (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1986) pp. 30-45. See also. J.S. Richardson "*Imperium Romanum*: Empire and the Language of Power," Journal of Roman Studies, 81 (1999): 1-9.
[35] Doyle, Empires, p.40. An empire, unlike a hegemony, focuses upon the internal politics within the subordinate country and attempts to rule the internal and external policies. A hegemon is concerned only with foreign policy. The imperial power is thus entangled in a variety of relationships that can hamper its political efficiency.

The ascension to empire represents not only an external change, but also an internal change. In contradistinction to empire, hegemony does not share that problem. The leader is not changed by its act of leadership. In regard to the United States, the temptation of empire carries with it the domestic changes that reflected the external responsibilities that had accumulated from 1947 to 1965. In particular, the main indicator of this change was the increase in the president's powers. The increased foreign policy responsibility after World War Two laid the foundation for an increase in the president's power. The president's power reached a peak with Lyndon Johnson.[36] However, even though the role of domestic changes is just as important if not more important for understanding the drift towards empire, the "empire by invitation" theorists does not address this point. Therefore, the "empire by invitation" should really be classified as hegemony. Another consideration that should be entertained is that "empire by invitation" is perhaps better suited to describing America's involvement in Europe not in Asia.

Steven Lee argues that "empire by invitation" makes a better match with events in Europe than in Asia. Lee focuses on these differences in his critique of how Gaddis and Lundestad use the term "empire by invitation." Lee argues, convincingly, that the term "empire by invitation" can only be applied to Europe and not to Asia. In particular, Lee points out that "empire by invitation" only applies to the developed world and does not apply to the developing world.[37] Moreover, Lee argues that the United States' involvement in Korean and Vietnam, from 1945- 1954, was to create an informal system to counter the Soviet Union expansion not by an invitation.[38] In this manner, Lee suggests that the United States pursued an informal empire rather than a formal colonial empire which its allies the British and the French had possessed before the war. The United States pursued a policy that while not overtly imperial, in the formal sense, was less reciprocal than the hegemonic leadership it exercised over Western Europe. The difference could be seen in how the United States treated its' Asia partners with less equality than its' Western European partners. Lee argues that the United States and its' Western European allies pursued the same goal of deterring

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[36] Silverstein, Imbalance, p. 84.
[37]Steven H. Lee, Outposts of empire: Korea, Vietnam and the origins of the Cold War in Asia, 1949-1954 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995) p.4 Lee makes a very good point in demonstrating that Lundestad's analysis applies to Western Europe and not Asia. Lundestad does not explore the question in either his original article or his subsequent revisions.
[38]Ibid., p. 7.

the spread of communism, but in Asia they pursued that goal through different methods. Thus, the United States' involvement in Asia during the post-war, especially in Vietnam, created an informal system.

By 1965, the informal system had changed. Initially, the informal system had relied upon developing indigenous anti-Communist allies. By 1965, as a result of Diem's authoritarianism, his assassination, the United States' complicity in his death, and the political instability that followed, the informal system was finished. Unfortunately, Lee's study does not extend beyond 1954, but he raises an important aspect of the United States' involvement in Vietnam and reveals an important indicator of the change in the United States' involvement. As mentioned above, the United States' increased military commitment changed the war, but it also changed its' relationship with Vietnam. In 1965 the relationship between the United States and Vietnam changed from an informal "empire" to a less formally dependent status.[39] The United States was not interested in a formal empire. However, by taking on the increased responsibility of defending South Vietnam, the United States faced a conceptual challenge that opened it up to charges of imperialism. The United States was concerned with the political stability of its ally. However, even as it undertook the "informal empire" role of controlling a subordinate country's internal politics, the United States was not seeking to create a colony. The United States sought to create a free country that could rule itself. The problems associated with the task outlined above is a central reason for the United States failure in Vietnam. The United States had difficulty in disentangling the conceptual problems as it fought a war that was in part a civil war, an international war, and a war in defence of a world order. The United States was not involved as an empire, its' involvement in Vietnam created the attendant problems of an imperial relationship, especially between the local authorities and the metropole.[40]

To explore the changed nature of the relationship, this thesis uses the word empire in a different sense from either Lundestad, Gaddis, or Lee. As mentioned above, empire requires a change in the metropole as well as in the periphery. Moreover, the United States never had the

[39]One can certainly argue, as Lyndon Johnson did, that the United States' relationship with South Vietnam changed politically with Diem's assassination and the United States' complicity in the coup. However, the decision to commit large amounts of American troops in 1965 signalled a dramatic, if evolutionary, change in America's relationship to South Vietnam.
[40] Doyle, Empires, p. 36-37.

imperial aim of creating a permanent structure of control. The Vietnam war created a challenge for the United States because the war highlighted the changes in the balance of power between the executive and legislative branches of government. In other words, the Vietnam war as a foreign policy responsibility added to the President's powers. The Vietnam war epitomised the centralisation of power in the president's hands as a result of overseas responsibilities. The United States was set adrift towards empire by the Vietnam War. The war was contributing to changes within the American regime. In this regard, the thesis relies upon an understanding of empire that is suggested by the work of William Appleman Williams.

The word empire, as it is used in this thesis, is closer to how William Appleman Williams applied it when discussing the changes in American foreign policy in Tragedy of American Diplomacy. In that work, and the others that followed, Williams argued that America's expansion abroad would have domestic consequences. Williams understood the drift towards expansion and empire would lead to changes in the United States. It was the threat of this transformation that he argued against in his works.[41] That is, Williams believed in the promise of the United States and believed that the United States could have chosen a different foreign policy than the one that led it to Vietnam. His search for the source of this drift toward empire led him to examine the United States first flirtation with empire in the 1890s. However, Williams focuses on a different question from this thesis in that he relied on economic evidence and the search for overseas markets, as the basis for America's "imperialism". In a sense, Williams captured the essential tragedy of American diplomacy, but based it on the wrong motives.[42] Williams was deeply concerned with America was being changed by its overseas involvement.[43] He focused on the Spanish-American war in 1898 as

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[41]See for example, William Appleman Williams, The Roots of the Modern American empire (London : Blond, 1970) and William Appleman Williams, Empire As a Way of Life: An Essay on the Causes and Character of America's Present Predicament Along With a Few Thoughts About an Alternative (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1982).

[42]David Noble, The End of American History : Democracy, Capitalism, and the Metaphor of Two Worlds in Anglo-American Historical Writing, 1880-1980 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1985) pp. 136-139. Noble argues that the root of Williams complaint with American foreign policy is that Williams is preaching a conservative jeremiad trying to reconcile American democracy with American capitalism. Thus, Williams seeks to restrain the utopian aspect to American politics for fear that the United States will, through a belief in its status as a redeemer nation, bring us to the brink of Armageddon. At the same time Williams is worried about how the domestic American capitalism and the marketplace society it has created are undermining the traditional aspects of American society thus leading to comfort. See also Williams, Roots of Empire, p. 46.

[43] See Williams, Roots of Empire, pp. 23-24.

an example of the question.[44] Yet, the temptation of empire was resisted. The United States, after a sharp and searching series of debates over the fate of the Philippines, ultimately rejected the temptation of empire.[45] Although by his last book, Williams appeared to be echoing Kissinger's post-Machiavellian Moment like calls for America to accept the limits of power and to live within those limits.[46] The thesis, in this regard, follows Williams by focusing on how the Vietnam war was changing the United States, its regime, and its foreign policy.

The work of Gaddis, Lundestad, and even Lee focused on America's external behaviour, but Williams sought to find the source of that behaviour. Williams focused on the detrimental effect the overseas expansion was having on the domestic structure. In that regard, the thesis follows his understanding of empire, but even as the thesis follows Williams, it departs from him in an important way. The goal is to find a hybrid position between Gaddis and Williams in that foreign policy philosophy reflects international behaviour as well as domestic causes. Thus, the goal is not to find the roots of the United States' behaviour or to explain its' leadership in Western Europe. The goal is to understand the more limited problem of how the United States' involvement in Vietnam changed its foreign policy philosophy. Its involvement in Vietnam reflected the United States' vision of itself and its role in the world. The term empire here reflects the universalism or the world order that America was trying to defend. In turn that foreign policy activity led to changes within the domestic arena. The changes in the political regime, created by the overseas responsibilities reflect the word's ancient meaning. The United States experienced changes as it faced the temptation to expand its domestic sphere, reflect the Roman experience where empire referred, among other meanings, to the expression of a universal order.[47]

The thesis focuses indirectly on the problems of an imperial burden by arguing that the United States' involvement in the Vietnam war was a severe economic, political, and social burden. The burden created by the Vietnam war required changes in the domestic structure. In particular,

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[44] See for example, Robert L. Beisner "1898 and 1968: The Anti-Imperialists and the Doves," Political Science Quarterly 85, no. 2. (Jun., 1970): 187-216.
[45] Ibid. p. 191 A key point to remember is that in 1898 the discussion centred on the issue of colonisation and annexation. Such questions did not arise over South Vietnam.
[46] See Noble, End of American History, p. 137.
[47] See Liska, War and Order, p.14. Liska does differ in important ways on how he understands an imperial power. In particular, he suggests that a large margin of error is a sign of an imperial power. p. 29 See also Stanley Hoffman, Gulliver's troubles, or, the setting of American foreign policy (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968).

the economic costs required tax increases. In the social sphere, the civil rights movement found its stride during the Vietnam war.[48] For the United States to "win" in Vietnam and thereby maintain its world order that it had identified with its security, would have required steps towards becoming an empire. The moment when a republic becomes aware of the need for this transformation, is the Machiavellian Moment. The Machiavellian Moment is what the United States faced, between 1965 and 1968, with the commitment of American troops to defend South Vietnam and to defend the free world order.

The decision to increase the United States' involvement in the war and the aftermath of that decision changed how the United States viewed: itself, the world, and its role in the world. The decision's profound impact is best understood within the context of not only the Johnson administration, but within the whole post-World War II foreign policy milieu. A full history of the United States' Cold War foreign policy, or the crisis of American liberalism is beyond the scope of this thesis. The thesis attempts a smaller goal of exploring the changes in foreign policy philosophy. To understand how the "Machiavellian Moment" changed the United States' foreign policy philosophy, the thesis uses three connected case studies. The three case studies look at American foreign policy and its' underlying philosophy before, during, and after the decision to commit the United States to the Vietnam war. The thesis focuses primarily upon the immediate philosophical context of the 1965 decision and the two statesmen who represent the foreign policy philosophies before and after the decision: Dean Rusk and Henry Kissinger.

Dean Rusk, the subject of the first case study, represents the foreign policy during the Vietnam war and he acts as a link to the immediate post- World War II foreign policy. Henry Kissinger, the subject of the second case study, represents American foreign policy as it attempts to extract the United States from the failure of the Vietnam policy. Rusk and Kissinger will be compared and contrasted through three major questions. One, what is their vision of World? Two, what is their understanding of the United States' role in the world? Three, what is their vision of the United States? The questions correspond to the three areas of change between liberal internationalism and Kissinger's *realpolitik*. The first question addressed the changed geopolitical outlook in the United States' foreign policy from the Kennedy/Johnson bipolar world to the

[48] See Silverstein, Imbalance, pp. 65-100.

Nixon/Kissinger multi-polar world. The second question focuses on the changed foreign policy from liberal internationalism to pragmatic realpolitik. The third question, explores how the United States' involvement in Vietnam challenged and changed American foreign policy, and in doing so, called into question the United States' identity. The challenge to this identity reflects how each man saw the United States and what it represented. How Rusk and Kissinger viewed the United States influenced the other two questions. It forms the basis for how they would see the United States' role in the world as well as the basis for their world vision. In sum, these men and their contrasting outlooks will represent the different foreign policy philosophies that guided the United States into and out of Vietnam.

Dean Rusk: Pacta Sunt Servanda

Dean Rusk presents a starting point for understanding the change from liberal internationalism to pragmatic realpolitik. His vision of the world order expresses the basic tenets of the immediate post-cold war foreign policy consensus. The consensus, liberal internationalism, found its initial and most emphatic expression in the Truman Doctrine. However, contained within the Truman Doctrine's universalistic philosophy was the dangerous temptation of empire. Universalism combined with anti-communism, which took the form of the doctrine of containment, helped to create the foundation of the United States' involvement in Vietnam. Universalism is a thread throughout Rusk's speeches as Secretary of State. For example, Rusk spoke often and eloquently of the winds of freedom and the universality of America's revolution of freedom.[49] His speeches express an important, if often implicit, aspect of America's universalism, in the post-World War II era, the belief in progress.[50]

Rusk and Johnson were both firm believers in progress. They believed that America was leading the world to a better future and that its main challenger in the world, communism, imperilled freedom in general and the potential to accumulate freedom's benefits.[51] Economic

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[49]Dean Rusk, The Winds of Freedom: Selections from the Speeches and Statements of the Secretary of State Dean Rusk January 1961- August 1962 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963) p.5. and p. 16.

[50]Paul M. Kattenburg, The Vietnam Trauma in American Foreign Policy 1945-1975 (New Brunswick : Transaction Books , 1980) p. 71.

[51]Not only would a victory for Communism endanger the United States in the global balance of power, the Domino theory, but Rusk firmly believed, as noted above, in the benefits that America's fight for freedom could bring to the rest of the world. Unlike Acheson, who according to Rusk, "did not give a damn about the brown, yellow, black, and red peoples of the world", Rusk did care.

development and theories of modernisation underpinned the theories developed to combat the wars of national liberation threatened to be waged by the communists.[52] Kennedy, who accepted the communist challenge of wars of national liberation, believed that the Third World would be the theatre of conflict. To fight the communist threat, he supported Walt Rostow's anti-insurgency policies based upon development in the third world.[53] To fight the communism's vision of progress, America would have to promote its vision of progress. After Kennedy's death, that vision of progress not only continued but it was enlarged by his successor, Lyndon Johnson.

Lyndon Johnson and Dean Rusk had both grown up in poverty. Rusk would remark that his childhood was spent in conditions close to those in less developed countries.[54] Each man had been able to transcend those humble beginnings and reach the pinnacle of political power. Both men shared an outlook, although Rusk was not as outspoken about it, that rested upon a vision of progress. Both men were testimony to American dream and belief in a better future. Johnson, as Rooseveltian New Dealer, had witnessed the government's power to make life better for people. Thus, the administration carried with it a vision of progress not only at home, as the Great Society, but also abroad. The United States' foreign policy, after World War II carried with it the belief that by its actions could make the world a better place.

Dean Rusk represented, in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, the continuity with the fertile period of American foreign policy after World War II. He was involved with the shaping of the Truman Doctrine, the early days of the United States' involvement in the United Nations, and the equally influential NSC-68. Perhaps most importantly, for the question of Vietnam, he served as Assistant Secretary of State for the Far East during the Korean War and the

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Dean Rusk, as told to Richard Rusk, As I Saw It (W.W. Norton Company: New York, 1990), p. 422. This is not to say that Acheson was a racist, but to point out that he emphasised the Atlantic relationship over all others. In other words Acheson argued that the European, or Atlantic, relationship was the most important and therefore more important than the Pacific relationship. However, Rusk believed that others, outside of the European or Atlantic relationship, deserved the blessings of liberty. As a result, his foreign policy outlook shifted from the Atlantic to the Pacific and relied heavily on the universalism of the American defense of liberty.

[52]Gaddis, Strategies, pp. 200-202 and 208-210. See for example Rostow's work on economic modernisation as a counter to the Communist theories of modernisation. Walt W. Rostow, The Stages of Economic Growth: a non-Communist manifesto (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960)

[53] Gaddis, Strategies, pp. 217-218.

[54] Thomas J. Schoenbaum, Waging Peace and War: Dean Rusk in the Truman Kennedy and Johnson Years (New York: Simon Schuster, 1988), pp. 369-370.

Joseph McCarthy hearings.[55] As H. W. Brands points outs, it was during these years, that Rusk learned several lessons that would re-appear on the issue of Vietnam. The first lesson was the dangers of domestic political backlash for even the appearance of being soft on communism. Rusk experienced this backlash first hand and he testified at the loyalty hearings of several friends.[56] A second lesson was the danger of underestimating China. Rusk had served in the Chinese-Burma-India (CBI) theatre during the Second World War so he had an awareness of the inherent problems within the country. However, a major event from this period was the Korean war. This war demonstrated to Rusk the potential catastrophe of underestimating China's concern for the security of its borders. This was a lesson that Rusk and others perhaps over learned regarding Vietnam.[57] The third lesson, though less obvious than the others, was the need for the Secretary of State to demonstrate loyalty to the President's positions. Rusk's loyalty and refusal to appear at odds with the President endeared him to Johnson who was acutely conscious of inheriting Kennedy's advisors.[58] Loyalty is a constant reference by David Schoenbaum and Warren Cohen in their Rusk biographies. Critics of the Vietnam war have faulted Rusk on his stubborn loyalty to the commitment and his belief that his position should not appear to diverge from the President's position.

All of these lessons were learned during his stint as Under-Secretary of State for George Marshall and then as Assistant Secretary of State for Dean Acheson. During this crucial period in American foreign policy history, Rusk was involved in many of the policies that would shape American foreign policy through the Vietnam war. The Truman Doctrine was perhaps the most influential policy of that period. The Truman Doctrine and NSC-68 would serve as the basis for American foreign policy during the cold war until Nixon and Kissinger. These documents reflected, albeit in different ways, Dean Rusk's vision of American foreign policy. The Truman Doctrine reflected Rusk's belief in a world order that embodied freedom and the need to defend that freedom from totalitarian challenges. In that area, Rusk worked to include reference to the

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[55]Schoenbaum, Waging Peace, pp. 206-207.
[56]Ibid., pp. 200-201.
[57] See Khong, Analogies at War, p.45. The Korean War was the most the analogy used most in the decisions in 1965. According to Khong, Rusk, who used historical analogies more than any other participants, was in Germany during the rise of the Nazis, 1933, and was Under Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs at the outbreak of the Korean War.
[58]Brands, Wages, pp. 5-6.

United Nations (UN) in the original speech. He later worked with Senator Vandenberg to draft legislation elaborating the involvement of the UN in the Truman Doctrine.[59] Rusk's insistence upon the importance of international law was at odds with the dominance of realism. However, his insistence upon the rule of law, as the basis for state behaviour, underlined his vision of world order. Rusk insistence upon legitimate norms through his belief in international law was an important element in his anti-communism. If communists did not play by the legal rules, as they demonstrated (to Rusk) in fomenting political change through military force, then they had to be opposed. The anti-communism and belief in a world-wide struggle expressed in NSC-68 reflected his adamant opposition to Soviet Communism. During his tenure as Secretary of State, Rusk would repeatedly turn to the ideas propounded in these documents. In sum, Rusk was present at America's rise to globalism and helped to design the foreign policy that would support America's mission in the world.[60]

Lyndon Johnson: The failed foreign policy prince.

The 1960s, the decade of Vietnam, were a turning point, a turbulent time for United States foreign policy and diplomacy. For all its turbulence, the decade saw the United States maintain the outlooks and policies created at the beginning of the Cold War. Yet, for all its continuity, this decade would change United States foreign policy. In the words of one writer it was a "crucial decade" for American diplomacy.[61] The decade began on an optimistic note with President Kennedy calling the nation to take up its burden as the leader of the free world. In stirring language he asked the United States to "bear any burden, to pay any price in defence of liberty and its allies." By the end of the decade, that optimism was shattered. The decade was traumatic. In the span of ten years, one president had been assassinated, a second president avoided running for office because of the war, and a third president elected because of his plan to end the war and quell domestic discontent. On the domestic front, the nation faced social and cultural turmoil as

[59]Shoenbaum, Waging Peace and War, p. 149. Warren I. Cohen, Dean Rusk The American Secretaries of State and their Diplomacy ed. Samuel Flag Bemis (Totowa (N.J.): Cooper Square, 1980) pp. 10-12.
[60]See Stephen E. Ambrose, Rise to globalism: American foreign policy since 1938 (New York: Penguin Books, 1985) 4th rev. ed. See also Akira Iriye The Globalizing of America, 1913-1945 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
[61]Diane Kunz, ed., The Diplomacy of the Crucial Decade: American Foreign Relations During the 1960s (New York: Columbia University, 1994).

Americans tried to reconcile its principles with the horrors of an undeclared "limited" war in Vietnam. The domestic turmoil reflected the ambiguity and confusion of purpose in Vietnam but also called into question America's identity and its purpose in the world. Increasingly, the United States' purpose was questioned by students and voters who wondered what the United States was becoming as a result of the war in Vietnam. On the international front, the problem was even more bewildering. The United States entered the war to protect the credibility of its commitments but instead severely damaged that credibility. Within a span of ten years, the United States had gone from a nation confident in its mission and its abilities, to a nation unsure of itself, its role in the world, and its ideals.

The American public became increasingly disillusioned over the Vietnam war as the United States' involvement increased but the situation failed to improve. As troop levels increased without any apparent success, the American public began to question the immediate reasons for the war. This doubt grew and soon the public began to question the underlying foreign policy logic of the war.[62] For most Americans, Vietnam was a faraway place with no direct impact on their lives. With the commitment of troops, however, Vietnam began to dominate the public's attention. As the casualties mounted and domestic unrest increased, the public's attention began to focus on the logic underpinning the decision to commit American troops. It is important, therefore, if we are to understand how the decision transformed American foreign policy, to comprehend the logic behind the decision to commit troops.

The decision of 1965 culminated a year of increased United States military activity and involvement in South Vietnam.[63] South Vietnam was in a precarious and worsening military position. After Diem was overthrown in a coup, domestic instability increased and the political situation worsened throughout 1964. As 1965 started, the military situation in South Vietnam began to deteriorate further. At the start of this fateful year, President Johnson escalated the air war against North Vietnam to impede their support of the Viet Cong insurgency in South Vietnam

[62] This can be seen in the public opinion polls. See Ole R. Holsti, and James N. Rosenau, American Leadership in World Affairs: Vietnam and the breakdown of consensus (London : Allen & Unwin , 1984) and John E. Mueller War, Presidents, and Public Opinion (New York: Wiley, 1973) for public opinion data.

[63] Several books focus on the events leading up to the decision to intervene. See footnote number thirty-nine.

and contain the deterioration. When the air campaigns failed to stem the tide, South Vietnam neared collapse. Johnson, after an extended internal debate, committed United States troops to the ground war. By committing American troops, Johnson committed the United States' prestige to the conflict and, perhaps most importantly, he committed the American public directly to the war and its outcome.[64] Along with the troops, the United States' ideals were engaged in that conflict. The success or failure of the war would not only have international consequences, most importantly the continued freedom of South Vietnam, but it would have domestic effects. These domestic effects were the result of the public's desire to reconcile American ideals with America's performance in the war.[65]

Johnson's decision, to commit troops, and how he reached that decision reflected the dangers of making incremental solutions that reflect the middle path between difficult choices.[66] Johnson realised that his aims in Vietnam were limited: keep the South safe from Northern aggression. In the words of Dean Rusk, the United States would leave if North Vietnam would leave its neighbour alone.[67] With this as its goal, the United States was fighting to avoid losing, as the criteria for victory rested in principle upon having the North stop its aggression. However simple this goal, it was complicated by Johnson's refusal to escalate the conflict by taking the war directly to North Vietnam. An invasion of North Vietnam, it was feared, would elicit a direct Chinese intervention and thus create a situation similar to the Korean war. The Chinese were already supplying large amounts of material and a considerable amount of men to the North. In addition, the Chinese had also warned the United States, albeit indirectly, that the Chinese would intercede if the United States went into North Vietnam.[68] All Johnson felt he could do was to dig in and wait out the North. Rather than making a firm decision to end the war or to escalate it

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[64] See Gardner, Pay any Price, p. 244.
[65] Ibid., pp. 253-255.
[66] See for example Gardner, Pay Any Price, p. 186. Johnson connects the civil rights movement with the international events. Also pp. 253-256 Where Johnson and his advisers see the interrelationship between the domestic and international realms in regard to Vietnam.
[67] Transcript, Dean Rusk Oral History Interview II, 9/26/69, by Paige E. Mulhollan, Internet Copy, LBJ Library. p. 17.
[68] On this question see Michael H. Hunt, Lyndon Johnson's War: America's Cold War Crusade in Vietnam, 1945-1965 (New York: Hill & Wang, 1996) pp. 87-88. See also Chen Jian, "China's involvement in the Vietnam War 1964-1969", The China Quarterly 142 (June 1995): 356-387. On the promise to intervene see pp. 360-361 and America's reaction p. 367. On the amount of men and material see pp. 372-379.

completely; Johnson, at nearly every major step, sought the path of least resistance between leaving and escalating. The fullest dilemma of a limited war had become painfully apparent. Moreover, as will be discussed in chapter three, from the theoretical perspective of the Machiavellian Moment, the search for a middle way is equally dangerous. Johnson's decision, however, was not made without reflection or without debate, but it was made within a political context that limited his choices and in some ways created the desire to find the middle path.

On the domestic side, Johnson could not leave for fear of what it would do to his domestic programs. In the international side, not only was he bound up by his belief in the cold war logic but with the desire to honour John F. Kennedy's commitments that had underpinned his own commitment.[69] The Cold War milieu created three major interrelated problems for Johnson and his freedom of action on Vietnam decisions. The first was his belief in the domino theory whereby the loss of Vietnam to the communists would lead to further losses until the United States was fighting in San Francisco. The second problem, while related to the domino theory and concerned about the loss of Vietnam, was related to the domestic scene. Johnson wanted to avoid "losing" Vietnam in the sense that China had been "lost" in 1949 and this international event would influence his domestic status. Finally, Johnson was haunted by President Kennedy's inaugural address proclamation that America would "pay any price and bear any burden".[70] He feared that not only would there be conservative backlash for "losing" Vietnam, but that the liberals would turn on him for betraying JFK's commitments. In Johnson's eyes, he was caught in the middle with no way to escape but to persevere in his policies.

The domestic and international constraints highlight an important dilemma inherent in the Machiavellian Moment. At its root, the Machiavellian Moment is a clash between virtue and *virtu*.[71] On the side of virtue was the desire to reform America and bring the American dream to every American. On the side of *virtu*, understood as military skill, America had to demonstrate its

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[69] See for example, Brands, Wages, p.4 and p.234. Also Doris Kearns, LBJ and the American Dream (Deutch: London, 1976), pp. 252-254. Johnson spoke of having bad dreams and his fear of being called a coward by Robert Kennedy for betraying JFK's legacy.
[70] Moya Ann Ball, "The Phantom of the Oval Office: The John F. Kennedy Assassination's Symbolic Impact on Lyndon B. Johnson, His Key Advisers and the Vietnam Decision Making Process." Presidential Studies Quarterly 24 (Winter 1994): 105-119.
[71] For an very interesting analysis of virtue and *virtu* within Machiavelli, see Harvey C. Mansfield Jr., Machiavelli's Virtue (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

resolve and its ability to confront communist aggression. Johnson was committed to changing America's domestic front and thus was doubly constricted in the war. As Lloyd Gardner, as have others, argued, LBJ wanted to achieve his Great Society but at the same time he did not want to "lose" Vietnam in the way that China had been "lost". Compounding this difficulty was the strategic dilemma in Vietnam. The United States could not invade North Vietnam because of the fear that it would bring China into the war as had happened in Korea, nor could the United States leave. Moreover, the analogies were also used to support withdrawal or intervention options with those supporting an intervention pressing the Korean analogy while those opposing stressing the Dien Bien Phu analogy.[72] Thus, the US was stuck in a **middle path** of sustaining the war in South Vietnam, since the United States would neither escalate nor leave. As Johnson put it, with one fist he was waging war, while with the other fist he was offering peace. The desire for a middle path exemplifies, as we will see in chapter three, the dilemma of the Machiavellian Moment. A republic regime faces an imbalance in the regime created by forces from without, *fortuna*, or within, corruption. Johnson faced, at the heart of his Vietnam strategy, a dilemma he could not resolve. He could not withdraw from South Vietnam nor could he widen the war. In a larger sense he faced the dilemma of having to choose between war and domestic reforms. In effect, Johnson's policy from 1965 onward was one of escalating the commitment to South Vietnam and the outcome of the war without escalating (widening) the war.

To achieve victory in Vietnam according to the principles stated by Rusk would have required one or both policy choices. The first choice was twenty years of a quasi-colonial war as hinted by Douglas Cater in a memo to McGeorge Bundy. The second choice was to change the war by invading North Vietnam and thus fighting, if necessary, China to defend South Vietnam. The pursuit of "victory" through these alternatives would have domestic and international repercussions. The first option was discussed by Douglas Cater and McGeorge Bundy in discussing the domestic response to the war.

> On the same day, July 28, that Johnson announced the troop buildup, Doug Cater....invited McGeorge Bundy to a meeting to discuss the government's information program, "primarily as it pertains to the domestic audience." The "home front" was a real front line in this war, said Cater, and he attached an outline of what was to be discussed. The basic assumption they would work from, he wrote, was that "we are going to have a 10 to 20 year period of "twilight

[72] Khong Analogies,. p. 167.

> war'" That situation required a "sophisticated consensus of the American people" to avoid the dangers of "polarization and extremism"[73]

The geopolitical implications of either path to victory would have been daunting as well since they would have created a democratic outpost on the Eurasian landmass and on China's border.[74] Yet, these challenges in the international arena would have been equalled by the domestic challenge that either policy would have entailed. The United States would have to undergo severe dislocations to its domestic political structure to achieve these international goals. For example, Dean Rusk mentioned that the war had to be kept limited because the fear of creating a "war fever" in the nuclear age.[75] Johnson also worried about keeping the war as low key as possible for domestic political purposes, namely the passage of his Great Society legislature.

The dilemma points to a central problem confronting United States foreign policy during the Vietnam conflict and its acceptance of global containment. An external empire, as demonstrated by the continued existence of South Vietnam through a long war, would have required the United States to take on the characteristics of an empire internally.[76] For example, the period saw an increased reliance upon and the president's prerogative in foreign policy to justify increased presidential powers. While the term empire may overstate the domestic changes required, it does suggest the philosophical dilemma that America faced in Vietnam. Johnson was sensitive to these nuances and they are reflected in his decision to avoid a declaration or war, go to a wartime economy, or call up the reserves. In part this was due to a desire to avoid a "war psychosis" but also because the congressional problems associated with these changes. However, in important ways, the rise of presidential powers, the domestic political structure was being changed to meet the external requirements of United States foreign policy.[77]

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[73] See Gardner, Pay Any Price, p. 253.
[74]Hans J. Morgenthau argued that China would not allow this and would have required a war we could not win nor that we could afford to lose. Hans J. Morgenthau, Vietnam and the United States (Washington D.C: Public Affairs Press, 1965) In a conversation with Dean Rusk, Charles De Gaulle made a similar argument about the limits to America's power to carry out what its policies implied. See Gardner, Pay any Price, p155. The question is developed more fully in chapter four.
[75]See Rusk, As I Saw it, p. 456.
[76] Raymond Aron, The Imperial Republic: The United States and the World, 1945-1973 trans. Frank Jellinek (New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1974) points to the tension between being a republic at home and an empire abroad.
[77] See Silverstein, Imbalance of Powers, pp. 65-122.

Henry Kissinger: Machiavelli's adviser.[78]

Understanding Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon help us to see the immediate consequences of the Machiavellian Moment. Nixon and Kissinger faced a difficult foreign policy dilemma. They realised that the United States could no longer stay in Vietnam, but at the same time they could not openly abandon the principles that led to America's commitment. In seeking a decent interval so that America could have peace with honour, Nixon and Kissinger were deeply aware that the perception of power was just as important as its actuality.[79] They knew that they had support South Vietnam at the same time they were withdrawing to isolate America's withdrawal from other foreign policy questions. At the same time they had to sustain belief that America would uphold its commitments. The withdrawal was made more difficult because they realised that continued involvement in Vietnam limited their freedom of action in foreign policy. Essentially, their task was to put South Vietnam back into perspective, the periphery of American interests, rather than to allow it to continue to dominate American foreign policy.

America's failure in Vietnam and the need to extricate American honour from the quagmire was emblematic of the changed world that Nixon and Kissinger faced. Unlike the hope that exemplified the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, Kennedy more than Johnson's since Johnson had been consumed by Vietnam, Nixon and Kissinger were acutely aware of the limits of America's power. Their foreign policy was based on the awareness of the United States' precarious economic position, the changed international arena with the emerging strength of China. Their belief in the changed international system was demonstrated by their efforts to bring both the Soviet Union and China into a new system of power. To include both the Soviet Union and China, states considered by Kissinger to be revolutionary, into a new international system would change their status since they would have a responsibility for the system's stability. Thus, the United States would relinquish its universalistic mission. The goal was to change the structure of the international system by bringing revolutionary states into the system. By giving them a stake in the system, these revolutionary states would, if they wanted continued legitimacy bestowed by the

[78] For a fuller understanding of how Machiavelli understood the perfect adviser to a prince, see chapter Twenty Two and Twenty Three of The Prince.
[79] See Gardner, Pay any Price, p. 540.

system, sustain the stability of the system. This vision of the world contrasted sharply with Rusk and Johnson's vision of globalism and universalism in the years leading up to Vietnam.

In essence, Nixon and Kissinger's strategy of détente recognised the changed world situation and that America had to give up its universalistic and globalist mission. There were now more centres of power than just American and the Soviet Union and America's failure in Vietnam was proof of the limits of American power. Kissinger's program of détente would also create a new international system that would limit the threats of confrontation that marked the Cold War. Détente would end the cold war and usher in a new era of stability. Kissinger's strategy of détente recognised that the world had changed, but most importantly, it recognised and worked within the limits of American power.

Kissinger, unlike Rusk, did not believe in progress. Kissinger saw the abyss of instability and disaster in the international system as an ever present problem that could never be solved or transcended. The only hope was to improve one's position. The international system had changed as a result of the United States' weakness created in part by its' preoccupation with Vietnam. The war had divided the public and weakened the economy both of which contributed to the United States weakened international position. Moreover, the Watergate crisis had distracted Nixon and weakened his authority. Kissinger believed that in this period of turmoil his creative statesmanship was necessary for keeping America from falling irretrievably into the abyss of instability.

In a break from the past, Kissinger and Nixon followed a new geopolitical outlook that reflected the limits of American power. Based in large part upon the belief that the world contained multiple centres of power, this vision differed greatly from the containment centred globalist powers. Even though the United States continued to have commitments around the world, Kissinger insisted that his was not a globalist agenda. Both the super powers would work within the limits of their spheres of influence. Multipolarity and the need to develop a new structure based upon a sense of legitimacy that would include states previously considered to be revolutionary, required a changed geopolitical vision. The geopolitical vision, while not shirking global responsibilities, was predicated upon a more sophisticated calculation of power. Even though the world system was divided into bipolarity of military powers, other aspects of power, such as economic existed which influenced the international system. With Nixon and Kissinger,

the underlying geopolitical vision had changed from universalistic globalism to one based upon a more pragmatic policy based on limited power. In other words, Kissinger sought to avoid the excess of ideology and to accomplish this he had to fashion a new geopolitical approach that eschewed universalism.

As Peter Dickson pointed out, Kissinger statesmanship exemplified a post-Machiavellian Moment outlook. His statesmanship is not one based upon hope and progress, but what has been lost and what must be done to hold back further disintegration. He represents a figure acutely aware of the limits of power.[80] The limits of the United States' power both internationally and domestically were readily apparent to Nixon and Kissinger. The most glaring domestic financial cost of the war was rampant inflation that created a crisis in the international system that precipitated the closing of the "gold window".[81] The American dollar would no longer be backed by gold. The United States had to devalue its currency to help finance the costs of the war. Jacob Viner warned of this problem. He argued that the United States had financed its war effort, in part, by the gold reserves it held and that the war would create balance of payment problems.[82]

A comparison of Dean Rusk and Henry Kissinger allows us to focus on the secretary of state, the only position in the cabinet that is solely devoted to foreign relations. The president must divide his attention between domestic affairs and foreign relations. Thus, even though the President has the final responsibility for foreign relations, the Secretary of State has foreign affairs as his or her sole priority. For the most part, the president must devote considerable attention with domestic affairs. While domestic affairs influence foreign policy, the thesis does not seek to explore how the Johnson and Nixon administration shaped domestic policy. The thesis takes a more modest approach to focus on how foreign policy changed between administrations. To understand the change and how it reflects the challenge and response to a near Machiavellian Moment, the thesis examines Rusk and Kissinger's view of the United States, the world, and the United States' role in the world.

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[80] See Peter W. Dickson, Kissinger and the Meaning of History (London: Cambridge University Press, 1978, pp. 83-116. See also, Gaddis, Strategies, p. 279.
[81] Joanne Gowa, Closing the Gold Window: Domestic Politics and the End of Bretton Woods (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983). See also M. Stephen Weatherford, "The International Economy as a Constraint on U.S. Macroeconomic Policymaking" International Organization 42, no. 4 (Autumn 1988): 611-625 and especially 615-623.
[82] Gardner, Pay any Price, p. 35.

Chapter Two: Dean Rusk Pacta Sunt Servanda.

John F. Kennedy's inaugural address infused the citizens of the United States with hope. Kennedy electrified the nation with his inaugural address when he proclaimed that the United States would "bear any burden, pay any price in the defence of liberty." He promised to get the country moving again and proclaimed a bold vision for the United States and the world. The United States would not only renew itself, but it held the promise, through its foreign policy, of renewing the world.[83] To fulfil that promise, the United States and its foreign policy would change dramatically. In pursuit of his vision and promise, Kennedy would lead the United States into the Vietnam war. As the decade unfolded, the Vietnam war would come to dominate: the decade, the domestic debate, and foreign policy.

After Kennedy's death, Lyndon Johnson sought to uphold his legacy. In particular, Johnson wanted to uphold the United States' commitment to South Vietnam. It was an issue that would dominate his entire presidency. Even the Civil Rights policies and issues were often handled on the basis of how they related to the Vietnam war. As Richard Dallek points out, Johnson feared that anti-Vietnam War protests, essentially focused on foreign policy, would combine with the Civil Rights movement to destroy his Great Society program.[84] Johnson and the United States were torn between the competing and irreconcilable goals created by Kennedy's promise. Johnson, drawing on the Kennedy promise, had the power to achieve the domestic reforms, but that same the promise trapped him in Vietnam. It left him unable to repudiate and thereby avoid his commitment to South Vietnam.

Johnson was haunted by the Vietnam commitment. As much as it haunted him, he feared relinquishing it. The war and its consequences slowly devoured his presidency. As Lloyd Gardner pointed out, Johnson was stuck with a dilemma created by his desire to wage war and have

[83] See for example Kennedy's inaugural address. "We observe today not a victory of party but a celebration of freedom--symbolizing an end as well as a beginning--signifying renewal as well as change." and "Now the trumpet summons us again--not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need--not as a call to battle, though embattled we are--but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and year out, "rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation"--a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself." Department of State Bulletin 6 February 1961, pp. 175-176. (Hereafter DOSB)

[84]See for example Robert Dallek, Flawed Giant: Lyndon B. Johnson, 1960-1973 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Lloyd Gardner, Pay any Price: LBJ and the wars for Vietnam (Chicago: Ivan Dees, 1995)

domestic reforms at the same time. Johnson wanted his foreign policy to find a middle path between two extremes. The first extreme was the desire to win the war--not at the cost of his domestic reforms--and that would require a wider war. The second extreme was the desire not to lose the war, (at the cost of his domestic reforms), but that would mean withdrawal. Johnson sought to find a middle path between the war abroad and the reforms at home both of which were linked by the commitment to Kennedy's promise. Johnson did not want to be distracted from his domestic reforms but at the same time he knew he had to fight in Vietnam if he was to achieve his domestic reforms. Johnson tried to resolve the tension by trying to do both.[85] To create a foreign policy that would allow him to achieve both, Johnson turned to Dean Rusk as his guide on the middle path between war and peace.

Dean Rusk had accepted Kennedy's vision for the world and set out to achieve it with American foreign policy.[86] Under Johnson, he continued that task. Johnson, unfamiliar with the nuances of Kennedy's foreign policy, relied heavily on Rusk. Johnson was ignorant of foreign policy, but he lacked the same level of familiarity and the grasp of the nuances that he had with domestic politics. Johnson's political instincts were better suited to the domestic arena. Johnson was reasonably aware of foreign policy, but he had built his political career in the Senate. In the Senate, he focused his skills and attention on domestic politics. Foreign policy issues were understood through the lens of domestic politics. Although Johnson possessed his own ideas about foreign policy, he relied heavily on Rusk's advice.[87]

Johnson wanted to fulfil the United States' promise in Vietnam, but he did not want it to distract from his domestic goals. Johnson would have liked to have found a way out of Vietnam, but he viewed the issue in very stark terms. Withdrawal appeared to be tantamount to the United

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[85] See Gardner, Pay Any Price, p.186; Doris Kearns, LBJ and the American Dream (London: Deutch: 1976) p. 251.

[86] While not well known at the time, although mentioned in his Foreign Affairs article on the Presidency, Rusk was very serious about honouring the constitutional imperatives of the President-Secretary relationship. See for example, Dean Rusk, "The President," Foreign Affairs 38, no. 3 (April 1960): 353-369. As he would say later, he was a strong admirer of George Marshall and hoped to emulate his approach to the position. In Dean Rusk's words, "He never let any blue sky show between he and the president." Dean Rusk, As I Saw It as told to Richard Rusk ed. Daniel S. Papp, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990), p. 516.

[87] Dean Rusk, however, argued that Johnson was well informed about Vietnam and foreign policy. See Transcript, Dean Rusk Oral History Interview II, 9/26/69, by Paige E. Mulhollan, Internet Copy, LBJ library Tape 1, p. 1.

States cutting and running. Johnson feared that if the United States withdrew from Vietnam, it would undermine the belief in the United States other foreign policy commitments.[88] What Johnson may not have realised fully, although he accepted it as his own, was that Rusk's foreign policy philosophy contained a similar strong belief in the importance of the United States' commitments. Moreover, Johnson probably did not realise how strongly Rusk held the universalistic theme, reflected Kennedy's vision for the United States and the world, of the rule of law. Johnson had reservations about the commitment to Vietnam, but had inherited a commitment and an advisor who believed absolutely in the importance of that commitment as well as the principles that supported it. Whereas Johnson's senate experience taught him the importance of compromise, Rusk's training in international law had taught him the importance of the rule of law. Thus, Johnson's foreign policy guide, Rusk, would hold firm to that middle path. The war in Vietnam would be kept limited and thereby avoiding drawing attention away from the domestic programs. Rusk was the one man who did not want to widen the war or to leave, but to hold on until the situation improved.[89] This outlook fit Johnson's goal of winning in Vietnam, thereby fulfilling a commitment, without distracting from the domestic issues that would be created by a wider war.

Dean Rusk never changed his mind on Vietnam. Rusk's unwavering commitment was derived from his foreign policy philosophy. This chapter will explore how Rusk's philosophy reinforced his commitment to Vietnam because of what the challenge in Vietnam represented to the United States and its foreign policy. Rusk couched his philosophy within the globalist themes that ran throughout the United States' post-1945 foreign policy. Unlikely as it may seem to his critics, Rusk was firmly within the post-war American foreign policy tradition. However, what Rusk did, which set him apart from that tradition, was that he attempted to connect policy and rhetoric. Rusk followed the logic of the Truman Doctrine and NSC-68, although he did not always refer to these documents, in stressing the commitment to South Vietnam. The Truman Doctrine and NSC-68 were the basis for his response to the central challenge faced by the United States' foreign policy in

[88] Lyndon Baines Johnson The Vantage Point; Perspectives of the Presidency 1963-1969 (New York: Holt Rhinehart and Winston, 1971), pp. 112-153.
[89] See United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States 1964-1968 Vol. II Vietnam January-June 1965 p. 95-97. (Hereafter FRUS).

the post-1945 era. The challenge, as Dean Rusk defined it, transcended the conflict in Vietnam. What was at stake was whether the United States could promote and defend a world order based upon the rule of law as outlined by the United Nations Charter.[90] Vietnam was an arena for the contest between competing visions of the political good and the political good was how the world was to be ordered.[91] The Soviet Union and the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) advocated a world revolution that advocated political change by force. The United States, according to Rusk, represented a revolution, but a revolution of freedom, where political change would take place by the rule of law. Rule of law was central to the UN charter and it embodied the central principles that Rusk and the United States would promote and defend. The charter was inspired by the same principles that inspired the United States' constitution. It is no accident that the UN world order emerged simultaneously with the United States' rise to globalism.[92]

Dean Rusk represented, in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, a continuity with the fertile post World War Two period in United States foreign policy. It is at this time when the framework for the United States foreign policy was created. During his rise to Deputy Under Secretary of State, Rusk first served as Assistant Secretary for United Nations Affairs. The office reflected and strengthened Rusk's life long interest in international law. Two other policies influenced Rusk's view of foreign policy: the Truman Doctrine and NSC-68. These two documents shaped his response to the Communist world revolution. The United States would defend freedom by following the Truman Doctrine and it would fight communism by following NSC-68. Perhaps most importantly, for the question of Vietnam, he served as Assistant Secretary of State for the Far East during the Korean War and in the wake of the Joseph McCarthy hearings.[93] As H. W. Brands points outs, it was during these years, that Rusk learned several

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[90] See DOSB 13 May 1963, pp. 727- 735.

[91] Leo Strauss, What is political philosophy? and other studies (Glencoe (Ill.): Free Press , 1959) Strauss argues that all political action is either for preservation or change and is guided by a good. The forces for change see the good they pursue as better than the good pursued by the forces for continuity. In either case, the contestants see their position as maintaining the good.

[92] See Transcript, Dean Rusk Oral History Interview II, 9/26/69, by Paige E. Mulhollan, Internet Copy, LBJ Library. Tape 2, p. 17. "We learned the lessons from World War II and wrote them into the United Nations Charter and into our great security treaties. The principal lesson we learned from World War II is that if a course of aggression is allowed to gather momentum that it continues to build and leads eventually to a general conflict."

[93] Thomas J. Schoenbaum, Waging Peace and War: Dean Rusk in the Truman Kennedy and Johnson Years (New York: Simon Schuster, 1988), pp. 206-207.

lessons that would re-appear concerning Vietnam. The first lesson was the dangers of domestic political backlash for even the appearance of being soft on communism. Rusk experienced this backlash first hand and he testified at the loyalty hearings of several friends.[94] A second lesson was the danger of underestimating China. Rusk had served in the Chinese-Burma-India (CBI) theatre during the Second World War so he had an awareness of the country's inherent problems. The major event from Rusk's tenure as Assistant Secretary of State for the Far East, was the Korean war. The war and China's response demonstrated to Rusk the danger in underestimating China's concern for its territorial security. A lesson that Rusk and others, perhaps, over learned regarding Vietnam.[95] The third lesson, though less obvious than the others, was the need for the Secretary of State to demonstrate loyalty to the President's positions and to maintain unity with the Secretary of Defense. Rusk's loyalty and refusal to appear at odds with the President endeared him to Johnson who was acutely conscious of inheriting Kennedy's advisors.[96] Rusk applied these lessons when he was Secretary of State and they shaped and reflected his foreign policy philosophy.

This chapter focuses on Rusk's foreign policy philosophy and has two main goals. The first major goal is to understand Rusk's foreign policy philosophy and put it within the context of the United States' foreign policy tradition. However, this requires two smaller tasks. The first task is to connect Rusk's foreign policy philosophy to the post 1945 period, in particular to show the influence of the Truman Doctrine and NSC-68 on Rusk's foreign policy philosophy. The second task is to connect Rusk's foreign policy philosophy to the decision on 28 July 1965 for committing the United States to the ground war in Vietnam. The second major goal is to show that Rusk's foreign policy philosophy not only creates the context for the July 1965 decision, but the context for the "Machiavellian Moment", as well. However, Johnson's decision to send troops will be explored in the next chapter. These chapters are a counter point to the Kissinger chapter.

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[94]Schoenbaum, <u>Waging Peace</u>, pp. 200-201.

[95] See Yeun Foong Khong, <u>Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965</u> (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 45. The Korean War was the analogy most often applied during the decisions of 1965. Rusk, according to Khong, used historical analogies more than any other participants. Rusk was in Germany during the rise of the Nazis, 1933, and was Under Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs at the outbreak of the Korean War.

[96]Harry W. Brands, <u>The Wages of Globalism</u>, pp. 5-6.

Rusk carried out and encouraged the United States' foreign policy to develop a world order based on the rule of law. Rusk's foreign policy philosophy, in this regard, reflected a strong universalistic theme. His pursuit of a universal order through foreign policy created an imbalance. The "Machiavellian Moment" as we will see, in the next chapter, develops from an imbalance within a republic. In the United States' case, the imbalance meant that foreign policy became overextended from its original principles. However, the imbalance was more than a cost-benefit equation where a state's commitments are extended beyond the state's immediate resources (the Lippmann Gap). The imbalance in foreign policy threatened to undermine the American regime by creating a crisis within society over its role abroad. The United States' foreign policy after World War Two had never attempted to apply the universal principles contained and limited to the American regime, through an active foreign policy, to a universal order. However, that aim, as Walter Lippmann so presciently argued, was implicit within the Truman Doctrine's language. Rusk attempted to fulfil the Truman Doctrine's promise and the test case was Vietnam.

This chapter seeks to explore Dean Rusk's foreign policy philosophy with the aid of three general questions. The questions and the answers form the centre of this case study and we will start with them. The questions are: What was Rusk's view of the world?; What was Rusk's view of the United States?; What was Rusk's view of the United States' role in the world? These questions help us to explore and sketch Dean Rusk's foreign policy philosophy. One caveat is important here before we begin. The chapter is not an attempt to construct Dean Rusk's operational code.[97] Although it shares some similarities to such an endeavour, the chapter is designed as a case study to sketch Dean Rusk's foreign policy philosophy.

Section One: Dean Rusk's View of the World

The first question to be explored is: What was Dean Rusk's view of the world? To break the question down into its component parts and treat them more specifically we will ask four sub-questions. First, What was Dean Rusk's understanding of the international arena? For example, did Rusk see the international system based upon conflict or Co-Operation? Second, what were the goals that Dean Rusk's world order should achieve? That is, what did Dean Rusk seek to

[97] G.G. Gutierrez, "Dean Rusk and Southeast Asia: An Operational Code Analysis," Paper presented at the 1973 Annual meeting of the American Political Science Association New Orleans September 1973. Gutierrez constructed an operational code for Dean Rusk.

accomplish or see achieved in the international arena? Third, How were Dean Rusk's world order goals to be achieved? Broadly speaking, what were the mechanisms or organizations needed to achieve the goals in number two? Fourth, What were the threats to Dean Rusk's world order?

Dean Rusk based his world view on what he perceived to be the central crisis of the post-war era. The crisis was larger than the struggle the Soviet Union and the United States or the ideological struggle between communism and liberal democracy. The central and underlying crisis in the international system was the struggle between two opposed world orders: one based on coercion versus one based on freedom.[98] Put differently, the struggle was between those who resorted to military aggression or subversion to achieve political change and those who sought a more constitutional process for change. In other words, former group followed the law of the jungle, might makes right, and the latter group stood for political change by the rule of law. To add an element of urgency, the struggle between coercion and freedom occurred during a period of immense world wide political, economic, and social change. The old political, economic, and social international orders were rapidly being replaced by new ones. For example, colonialism rapidly dissolved in the late 1950s and early 1960s and the new states that emerged changed the international arena dramatically. While change occurs in varying degrees at all times, Dean Rusk saw the 1960s as a period of dramatic and historic change.[99] The newly independent states were the new battleground between coercion and freedom.[100] If these states succumbed to the Communists wars of national liberation, the world of freedom would be diminished. The international struggle between coercion and freedom was reflected in Rusk's geopolitical outlook.

Rusk's geopolitical vision is the third part of his world view. Rusk saw the world as bipolar ideological struggle between the forces of coercion and freedom, but he did not see the world in strict Manichean political terms. Even though Rusk saw the Soviet Union as the principle adversary, he was willing to engage in substantive diplomatic negotiations with them if they sought

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98 See DOSB July 31, 1961, pp. 175-183 and Rusk, Winds of Freedom, p. 11.

99 See Transcript, Dean Rusk Oral history Interview IV, 3/8/70, by Paige E. Mulhollan, Internet Copy, LBJ Library. p. 29.

100 See Peter Rodman, More Precious than Peace: Fighting and Winning the Cold War in the Third World (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1994). Rodman argues that after the arenas of Europe and the delivery of nuclear weapons had become stalemated, the new arena for the Cold War would be the third world. This change occurred in the 1960s with Khrushchev's wars of national liberation and the attempt to turn the United States' and the West's flank.

constructive goals. Rusk pursued negotiations with the Soviets to maintain the general peace.[101] The ideological struggle between liberal democracy and communism shaped the international arena, but it did not define the international arena because, as Rusk believed, all men sought freedom. Thus, one could not identify the Soviet Union completely with the forces of coercion and this left room for diplomatic negotiations. The world struggle influenced Rusk's geopolitical outlook. For example, Rusk's commitment to South Vietnam shifted the United States' geopolitical focus to the Pacific[102] Although Rusk would stress that the United States was not ignoring its commitments to Europe, but that the same commitments to Europe's freedom were being extended into Asia.

Rusk's world view contained three basic elements. The first was the global philosophical struggle between coercion and freedom. The second element was the rapid political, economic, and social change unleashed by the emergence of newly independent states in the international arena. The third was the expanded bipolar geopolitical vision that shifted the focus from the Atlantic to the Pacific rim.

A. Goals to be achieved by the World Order.

The goals of Dean Rusk's world view can be summed up quite simply and directly because most of his addresses mentioned them.[103] Dean Rusk sought to create a world order based upon the principles contained in the first two articles of the United Nations Charter.[104] The UN charter contained the basis for developing and maintaining a world order guided by the rule of law.[105] A world order based on the rule of law would achieve four primary goals. The

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[101]See Ronald J. Stupak, "Dean Rusk on International Relations: An analysis of his philosophical perceptions," Australian Outlook: Journal of the Australian Institute for International Affairs 25, no. 1 (April 1971):13-28.

[102]See Cohen, Dean Rusk, p.128 Rusk shifted the geopolitical view away from the Atlantic to a global perspective. Unlike Acheson, who according to Rusk, "did not give a damn about the brown, yellow, black, and red peoples of the world", Rusk did care. Rusk, As I Saw It, p. 422. The change in geopolitical focus is also indicative of the changed philosophical outlook.

[103] These were collected in the book Winds of Freedom, but they a constant theme through his addresses and statements during his tenure. See DOSB 1961-1968.

[104] This follows from JFK's promise in his inaugural address to make the world a decent place. Rusk's speeches and statements during 1961-1963 reiterate this theme.

[105] The rule of law was a goal that Rusk repeated at nearly every occasion that he invoked the UN charter. On the role of international law within the United States' conception of the world order, see Francis A. Boyle, Foundations of World Order: The Legalist Approach to International Relations (1898-1922) (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

fundamental goal was, to maintain the peace and thus, specifically, avoid World War III.[106] Dean Rusk wanted to avoid World War III because he believed that a general war would involve the superpowers and, therefore, would be a nuclear war. The dangerous balance between the United States and the Soviet Union made Rusk aware of the need to be prepared to negotiate. Negotiations would help to defuse or prevent crises from becoming grounds for conflict between the superpowers. However, Rusk was aware that his primary task was to defend the United States. His willingness to negotiate was based on the acute awareness that either the Soviet Union or the United States could destroy the world. The **second goal** of Rusk's world order, derived from the first goal, was to achieve political change through peaceful means rather than by a resort to arms. This goal struck at the heart of Khrushchev's wars of national liberation speech which spoke of wars of national liberation against the Western powers. Rusk did not deny political change, but he did oppose any change that was carried out without the consent of the people or failed to follow the rule of law. The **third goal** was to foster economic development. The newly independent states were embracing liberty in a state of poverty. Rusk was aware that poverty and want of basic human necessities could quickly lead people to political turmoil which in turn would make them susceptible to revolution. However, Rusk was concerned about poverty not simply because of the threat of communist subversion but the dignity of man.[107] The **fourth goal** was to create world order based on the rule of law. This goal remained implicit in all that he did because it reflected world based upon the principles of the UN. The goals are discussed in the following paragraphs in greater detail.

Peace. Dean Rusk's world order was designed to achieve and maintain peace. The world had just emerged from twenty years of war and it was now time to strengthen the sinews of peace. Peace allowed freedom and prosperity to develop whereas war destroyed the normal economic and political interaction between states. A peaceful world order would allow states to pursue their development unimpeded. If states were allowed to develop unimpeded by outside aggression or coercion, then they could develop economically. If they could develop their economies, then they could reduce a major source of war, scarcity and want. If the newly independent states, emerging

[106] Transcript, Dean Rusk Oral History Interview II, 9/26/69, by Paige E. Mulhollan, Internet Copy, LBJ Library. Tape 2. p. 17-18.
[107] See Shoenbaum, Waging Peace, pp. 367-368.

from colonial rule, to achieve that level of development they would have to undergo a program of modernisation. As a result, the 1960s were a period of rapid modernisation for the underdeveloped states and the changes created political unrest. If the problems from modernisation could be limited and worked out without the threat of Communist revolution, the world order might be able to maintain peace. Yet, Rusk was aware that other challenges to that peace might develop.

Dean Rusk's greatest fear, if the peace was broken, was the possibility of World War III.[108] Rusk believed that the next general war would be a nuclear war and he therefore sought to avoid the threat of nuclear war. Rusk believed that his greatest accomplishment as Secretary of State was that nuclear war had been avoided and that was the greatest legacy he could pass on to his successor.[109] Coinciding with the goal of a general peace was the goal of accomplishing change by peaceful means. The areas most likely to be a source of instability and thereby a threat to the general peace were the newly independent states. The rapid economic and political change, from independence and modernisation, made them susceptible to influence from Communist forces. To defuse these crises and thereby avoid threats to the general peace, Rusk sought to channel that change through peaceful means. However, Rusk was not simply suggesting a defence of the status quo because, he would argue, the United States was founded by a revolution and it embodied the revolution of freedom.

Rusk desire for peaceful change reflected his belief in the rule of law. If man was to avoid the law of the jungle, might makes right, he had to accept the rule of law. Rusk also saw the rule of law as a positive strategy because the rule of law was more appealing and more stable than a government imposed and maintained by force. The newly independent states had cast off the governments that had been imposed on them by their colonial masters. However, these states were also vulnerable to the communist revolution because they were weak, poor, and disorganised. In

[108]The fear was that the conflict in Vietnam could quickly involve China and the Soviet Union in which a misunderstanding could escalate into a nuclear war. However, it is a different question entirely to ask whether Rusk was too sensitive to the fear of nuclear war and if that limited his advice in Vietnam and a limited the prosecution of the war. One should bear in mind the many references and the efforts made to keep the war limited, limited in its goals and limited in its methods. This reflected a level of prudence since the United States could have attempted to pursue victory by invading North Vietnam, but this opens up more problems. At the philosophical level, it would push the United States towards empire. This later point was suggested by De Gaulle during a conversation with Rusk. See Gardner, Pay any Price, p. 155.

[109] See Transcript, Dean Rusk Oral History Interview IV, 3/8/70, by Paige E. Mulhollan, Internet Copy, LBJ Library. p. 33.

January 1961, Khrushchev threatened to continue the communist revolution through wars of national liberation in the newly independent states and Rusk sought to counter that revolution with a revolution of freedom.[110] The United States would help the newly independent states remain free from communist influence and it was essential that they modernise. The revolution of freedom would succeed if their economic status could be improved.

Economic Development. Rusk sought to increase the economic development in the newly independent states. The United States could help in three distinct methods. The first method was that it could offer an alternative economic development model from that offered by the Communist powers. Rusk realised that the worldwide struggle included economic concerns.[111] Rusk would point to the poverty he had experienced growing up and the economic development that had helped to end it as evidence that the American dream could come true. Rusk grew up in circumstances as poor as any of those in the newly independent states. He grew up without running water or electricity. His family lived on subsistence farming. In his lifetime the region had developed economically to alleviate those problems. A second method for aiding economic development was to increase the United States' foreign aid. Rusk would spend much time testifying before congress on foreign aid. Foreign aid was an important part of the United States' post-World War Two foreign policies and it was a potent force in the cold war. The Marshall Plan was the most successful of the foreign aid projects and Rusk often pointed out that the plan was not designed against one enemy but against several: poverty, malnourishment, poor living conditions.[112] The third method was to increase trade. The United States strengthened its ties with its allies and other states through increased trade. As we will see in the next section, Rusk and Kennedy were deeply concerned with the Communist world revolution and Khrushchev's threat of wars of national liberation.

The hope of a just world order.

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[110] See Rusk, Winds of Freedom, pp. 1-8.

[111] See Walt W. Rostow, The Stages of Economic Growth: a non-communist manifesto (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960). See also Lyndon Johnson, My Hope for America (Random House New York, 1964) p. 90. Where he mentions the desire to build a great world society.

[112] See Rusk, As I Saw It, pp. 398- 407.

Rusk foreign policy philosophy had, as its overall goal, the creation of a world order based on the UN charter's principles. Rusk followed the charter for several reasons. The primary reason was that the principles of the UN charter best reflected the principles of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. As the greatest experiment ever in liberty, the ideas embodied in the Constitution offered the potential of freedom for all men. For that reason, among others, the United States had taken the lead in establishing the UN. The United States hosted the initial UN conference during World War Two and the UN headquarters was established in New York. The United States, in its support of liberty, the belief that the government derived its just powers from the consent of the governed, embodied the last great hope for mankind.[113] If the other goals could be achieved, the UN charter would guide the world order based on freedom.

Although Rusk's vision for a world order of freedom may appear idealistic in the face of the Communist challenge, his positive strategy and his world outlook were not based upon a naive idealism.[114] As Ronald Stupak pointed out, Rusk did not see the world in politically Manichean terms between undeterrable forces or that his idealism was without realism.[115] Rusk believed that freedom could be achieved for the whole world, including the Communist states, so long as all nations were committed to the rule of law. Rusk knew that the rule of law was difficult to achieve because one had to meet military aggression directly, firmly, and with military forces. Words would not stop bullets. Rusk understood the danger posed by those unwilling to accept the rule of law. For that reason he constantly stressed that the United States and its allies had to be strong militarily. Rusk realised that no matter how strong the rule of law appeared on paper, it would be meaningless if nations, especially the United States, did not back up their word. South Vietnam presented a challenge not only for the rule of law and a world order based on freedom, but to the United States' credibility in maintaining its commitments. Most importantly, Rusk equated the

[113] See DOSB 2 December 1963, p. 842.

[114]As Ronald Stupak points out, Rusk was not averse to using "realism" in the manner of Kennan or Morgenthau, but he used it to achieve an idealistic world order. American foreign policy would actively seek this end, it would not simply wait for it to occur by fortune. "[O]ne must invariably remember that this "official realism" was based on his consuming belief that the United States must *actively* pursue an international system based on the principles of the United Nations Charter. In effect, basic philosophical value judgements probably reflect more accurately the driving force behind a Rusk stance on a foreign policy issue than does an understanding of the realism of a Morgenthau or an Acheson [Emphasis in the original] Stupak, "Dean Rusk International Relations", p. 25.

[115]Ibid.

United States' s commitment to Vietnam with the commitment to Berlin. He feared the consequences if either commitment was doubted.[116]

Rusk witnessed how the League of Nations and liberal democracies failed to stand up to Japanese and German aggression in the 1930s. Tyrants, like Hitler, Mussolini, and Tojo, had ignored the League of Nations when it condemned their aggression. The Western Democracies had failed to stop these tyrants because they failed to back up their commitment to law with a commitment to enforce that law. In essence, they failed to fulfil their initial commitments to counter aggression and were only forced to take military action only when faced with threats to their security and existence. The Western Democracies were forced to wage a war they could have prevented had they the will and the commitment to act against the first aggression. Rusk learned from Munich, as a whole generation did, that unchecked aggression could quickly lead to a general war.[117] For Rusk, freedom and peace were indivisible. A challenge to freedom in a particular state meant a challenge to freedom everywhere. Rusk was determined to avoid events similar to those that lead up to World War Two. He would not let aggression go unchecked and gain a momentum that would lead to a general war. The challenges to the United States' commitment to freedom and the UN inspired world order would be answers by resolute action. Rusk was adamant expressing the United States' commitment to the freedom of independent states and its commitment to the world order envisioned by the principles of the UN charter.

Rusk knew that the rule of law and a world order based upon liberty were not only a defensive strategy for strengthening resistance to the Communist challenge, but it was also a positive strategy. The Communist insistence upon the historical inevitability of their revolution meant that they did not accept the status quo as it existed and that they would change it by any means necessary. Rusk, by stressing the rule of law, countered those ideas by suggesting the only way Communist states could be recognised is if they first accepted the primacy of the rule of law and the UN. If the Communist states accepted the rule law, an act that would give them an initial status boost, would limit their ability to act outside it. Thus, Rusk was willing to negotiate with the

[116] See Transcript Dean Rusk Oral History Interview II, 9/26/ 69, by Paige E. Mulhollan, Internet Copy, LBJ Library. Tape 1, p. 3-4. "The credibility of the President of the United States at a moment of crisis and the fidelity of the United States to its security treaties are both of the utmost importance in maintaining peace in the world." p. 4.
[117] See Khong, Analogies, p. 57.

Communists so long as they were willing to respect the rule of law. If they refused and simply sought to coexist on the basis of open or indirect aggression, they would be met with force. Thus, the rule of law offered a defence and a positive strategy as well as a basis for negotiating between politically opposed forces.

How to Achieve and Maintain the World order.

Dean Rusk believed that a world order could only be maintained if the United States was vigilant in upholding it. The United States was ideally suited, because of its dedication to liberty, to lead the defence of the UN world order. How it fulfilled its own foreign policy will be discussed in the section on the United States' role in the world, but here, we are concerned with the ways in which the world order could be maintained. Rusk focused, in general, on four mechanisms for maintaining and promoting the goals of his word order. All of these mechanisms are based upon **commitment.** The rule of law is only as powerful as the commitment to support it and carry it out. If nations were unwilling to commit to that type of world order and to support it when challenged, then the world order could not be maintained. Besides commitment there were three other mechanisms, but I have left out the most obvious resource, the United States' unilateral action, for three reasons. The first is that the United States has never undertaken military actions outside the Caribbean without an ally. The second is that if the United States must undertake, without allies, military action to defend its borders, or the world order, then there is not much of a world order left. The third reason is that the United States and its' role in the world are discussed later in the chapter.

The first mechanism was **collective security** as embodied in the UN charter and seen in the security alliances such as NATO. The second mechanism was the development of **diplomatic contacts**. These contacts would form the initial bands or sinews of peace to defuse or avoid crises. Diplomacy develops and strengthens the small ties that connect nations and the same ties in turn help to maintain the world order. The small diplomatic ties help to create the basis for commitment on larger issues. The third mechanism, **regional military alliances,** was between collective security and diplomacy in its effectiveness for facing threats to the world order. Regional military organizations like SEATO and NATO strengthened the United States' foreign

policy and its membership demonstrated its commitment to the region's security. As noted above, commitment underpinned all of these mechanisms in one form or another.

Rusk learned an important lesson from Munich, as did his generation, when the Western Democracies failed to fulfil their commitment to League of Nations' principles and failed to halt Nazi Germany's aggressive ambitions. Rusk, who was in Germany in 1933, had witnessed first hand the rise of Nazism in Germany. At the same time, he had followed closely the tragedy that unfolded when Japan invaded China.[118] Rusk told the following story to stress the importance of vigilance and commitment to the rule of law.

> When I was a student in Germany many years ago, I lived in Neue Babelsberg, and I had a canoe, and I used that canoe as often as possible in the lakes that surrounded Neue Babelsberg, near Potsdam. One day I pulled the canoe up on the bank and went into a restaurant for lunch. When I came back the canoe was gone. I reported it to the water police, and they with their boats scouted around a while. And then after a while they came back with the canoe and said, "We have found your canoe and have caught the thief, and he will be punished, but you yourself will be fined five marks for tempting thieves." My German friends with legal background have vociferously denied that there has been a crime in Neue Babelsberg called "tempting thieves" and that I perhaps was the victim of an ambitious police officer.
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> But nevertheless the lesson has been worth many times more than the five marks to me, because I believe that we in our democracies are confronted with the fundamental problem of how we avoid tempting thieves. Our problem is how to pursue the human, the long term, the civilized purposes of democratic societies and yet maintain the resolution and the strength to make it clear that thieves shall not have their way.[119]

Rusk suggests that the story may have been apocryphal, but it contains an insight into how he understood the need to fulfil one's commitment to the rule of law. Early in Rusk's tenure as Secretary of State, the United States faced an immediate and grave challenge over its commitment to Berlin's freedom.[120] Rusk and Kennedy were quite conscious that a failure to maintain their commitment to Berlin's freedom would have major consequences for the rest of the United States' commitments. While Rusk may have learned the lessons of Munich too well, he did understand what principles were at stake when commitment to freedom and liberty were challenged. In Vietnam, for example, Rusk, as was Johnson, was aware that the issues at stake transcended Vietnam. He suggest that the security of Vietnam was as important as the security of Western

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[118] See Schoenbaum, Waging Peace, pp 50-51, 61.

[119] See DOSB 6 March 1951, p.335 and Rusk, As I Saw It, p.82-83.

[120] Schoenbaum, Waging Peace, pp. 331-336.

Europe because they exemplified the same principled commitment to collective security. Although Western Europeans might disagree with that logic, Rusk believed it.

The United States' commitment was vital to sustaining collective security.[121] Collective security was the primary security structure for the UN through Article 51. It required all members of the collective to recognise and act on the threat. In Vietnam, that threat was never fully articulated and that reflected the inability to make a convincing and coherent argument for collective action.[122] Even without collective security, the United States had a historical commitment, starting with Eisenhower, to South Vietnam. Neither Rusk, nor Kennedy, nor Johnson was going to back down. As Lyndon Johnson declared "We did not choose to become the guardians of the gate, but there is no one else."[123] Yet, collective security was the central active measure to maintain the world order, since Article 43 creating a UN armed force was not supported. Collective security, outside the regional defence structure, failed to work effectively in Vietnam. Even though states in the region, like South Korea, recognised that their security was tied, at least indirectly, to the United States' effort, a regional collective response did not develop. Moreover, the world community did not see Vietnam in the same manner as the United States.

Ultimately, the American people could not understand how Vietnam represented a question of collective security since the administration was often vague or unclear as to the threat they were facing. The threat appeared abstract to most Americans, even though Rusk continually stressed that North Vietnam's aggression was the root cause. Rusk stressed, following his Munich experience, the possible danger that this initial aggression represented the larger trend of Communist aggression in the region. To solidify the United States' commitment and attention, Rusk connected the threat to South Vietnam to the Truman Doctrine. As Warren Cohen argues, Rusk expanded the Truman Doctrine to show that the United States had a duty to help all countries facing outside aggression especially in South East Asia. The Truman Doctrine's original intent was not encompass the world, but to focus on the incidents in Greece and Turkey, although the

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[121]Rusk Oral History Tape PPPPP p. 28 Rusk says that Kennedy was a firm believer in collective security.

[122] Kenneth W. Thompson, Traditions and Values in Politics and Diplomacy: Theory and Practice (Louisiana State University Press: London, 1992), pp. 273-279, esp. 279, where he discusses the ambiguity of collective security in Vietnam.

[123] Brands, Wages, p. 241 Johnson tried to visualise what the world would look like if the United States did not intervene.

language did state "free people everywhere resisting outside aggression." Rusk increased the United States' foreign policy commitments and globalized its security. However, contrary to Cohen's argument, Rusk inherited the SEATO framework and Eisenhower had warned of falling dominoes in Asia. What is different is that Rusk, Kennedy, and Johnson took steps to carry out the commitment to the Truman Doctrine's principles. As Hans Morgenthau pointed out, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations were trying, unlike previous administrations, to have their policies match their rhetoric.[124] Rusk's statement in Bangkok for the 1961 SEATO conference, where he explained the role of the Truman Doctrine, demonstrated the universalistic streak in his foreign policy philosophy.

In expanding the United States' geopolitical focus, Rusk also increased the threats it faced and what it had to defend. The perceived threat in South East Asia changed from the Soviet Union's communism or subversion in specific countries, to the universal threat posed by the Communist world revolution. In response, United States had to demonstrate the United States' universal commitment to defend freedom everywhere.

> This sense of responsibility has no geographical barriers. Our attention here is focused on Southeast Asia. The people of this treaty area, no less than elsewhere, have an inherent right to create peaceful, independent states and to live out their lives in ways of their own choosing. Loss of freedom means a tragedy whether that misfortune overtakes a people on any continent or any island in the seven seas.[125]

Thus, where liberty was threatened, Rusk committed the United States to defend it. He transformed the Truman Doctrine's, implied, regionalism into a universalistic imperative.[126] However, critics rejected Rusk's collective security arguments by arguing that that the conflict was a civil war and did not signal further aggression by the PRC or North Vietnam. In the end, the American people rejected Rusk's justification that collective security required the United States' intervention in Vietnam. Rusk understood that Americans could be sceptical about collective

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[124] Hans J. Morgenthau, Vietnam and the United States (Washington D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1965), pp. 84-87.
[125] See DOSB 17 April 196,1 p. 547 and Cohen, Rusk, p. 128.
[126] Cohen, Rusk, p. 128.

security.[127] Yet, in later years, Rusk would ask how one could avoid World War Three without collective security?[128]

The United States' failure, and the apparent failure of collective security, in Vietnam points to a central problem for Rusk's vision of a UN world order and more broadly for the United States' foreign policy. He was aware that the UN charter's principle of collective security was inadequate to meet the challenges of political warfare or subversion.[129] The charter could not define indirect aggression or subversion as clearly as overt military aggression between states. He accepted that weakness because the more pressing concern to meet the threat of overt military aggression.[130] Moreover, collective security's failure and rejection meant that his universalistic outlook was rejected as well. Rusk's collective security universalism, that the challenge to any independent state's liberty was a threat to all states, broke down on indirect aggression. Rusk could not demonstrate or extrapolate that the incidents of aggression that may appear initially minor would lead to open aggression. In the same manner, the United States' foreign policy, in the guise of containment, had extreme difficulty selecting vital from peripheral goals. The problem was solved easily regarding overt aggression, the Korean war, but it became acute regarding indirect challenges, political revolutions, as seen in, for example, Vietnam, Nicaragua and Angola.

Another mechanism for maintaining the world order was military alliances. Unlike collective security, these alliances could be invoked more easily. In Vietnam, Rusk invoked the SEATO treaty to justify the United States' involvement. Military alliances also helped to stem indirect aggression or subversion because an outside power could give aid directly to the target nation. The military alliances also helped the United States maintain its overall security by sharing the security burden.

A final mechanism, perhaps the most direct, but least powerful, was diplomacy. Diplomacy would help to foster the small ties that help states to understand each other's policies and to defuse or avoid crises that could lead to war. Diplomacy and diplomatic process were

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[127]Rusk could understand why Americans would be sceptical of collective security since they have suffered over six hundred thousand dead and wounded to support it and America supplied 90% of the forces in Korea. See Rusk's Oral History Tape T.
[128]See Transcript, Dean Rusk Oral History Interview II, 9/26/69, by Paige E. Mulhollan, Internet Copy, LBJ Library. Tape II, p. 17.
[129]See Schoenbaum, Waging Peace, p. 153.
[130]Ibid.

essential to Rusk's world order because they were based upon international law and reinforced the rule of law. Moreover, diplomatic interactions helped to maintain the world order. The small linkages of diplomacy would lead to increased contacts that would bind the nations together. Yet, for all its importance, diplomacy and even collective security were fundamentally unstable. All of these mechanisms were highly unstable because they relied upon the power and persistence of one's commitment. Collective Security, International Law, and Diplomacy, only worked so long as the underlying commitment was strong.

4. Threats to the World Order.

Rusk's world order faced a variety of threats. The dominant threat was indirect and direct aggression by states intent upon political change through military force. While Rusk was aware that the communist bloc did not always act in unison, he was aware that Communism in general held the idea of world revolution. The danger in 1947, was not the overt direct aggression by large armies crossing borders, although Korea was a stark reminder of its latent presence, but the threat of indirect aggression. The UN charter defined direct aggression, but indirect aggression was not and this, as Rusk recognised immediately was to become the Communists main weapon. Khrushchev threatened wars of national liberation were a variation on that theme. Indirect aggression was carried out at the lower end of the conflict spectrum since it tended to blend with the more extreme and violent forms of political opposition. Rusk also realised that such threats were hard to deal with and would require much patience and effort to overcome them.[131] Moreover, Rusk believed that the threat of indirect aggression was a symptom of a larger, although, indirect threat to Rusk's world order, the threat from economic underdevelopment.

Rusk believed that most problems faced by the newly independent states were the result of the rapid political, economic, and social change created by modernisation.[132] The newly independent states were undergoing that process of modernisation and he feared the change could breed revolution. The political, economic, and social change could be exploited by communist forces who could argue that the Communist world revolution was an inevitable historical success. As Henry Kissinger pointed out, Marxism succeeded in the underdeveloped world because it could

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[131]Rusk does not believe that America has developed an adequate strategy for dealing with insurgencies. Oral History Richard Russell Library Tape XXX XXX p. 8.
[132]See Schoenbaum, Waging Peace, p. 254.

best explain where political authority should reside.[133] Rusk set out to implement a positive strategy to counter the communist threat by encouraging the economic and political development within the newly independent states. For example, Kennedy made a special effort to deal with this problem by creating the Peace Corps as a way to counter underdevelopment.[134] Moreover, the Peace Corps and programs like the Alliance for Progress were part of the United States' positive foreign policy strategy to counter Communism in the developing countries.[135] Kennedy stressed that the United States undertook these goals because they were right, and not simply to counter what the Soviet Union was doing. However, their benefits contributed to a positive strategy against wars of national liberation. In this context, Walt Rostow, who later became Johnson's National Security Advisor, put forward a development theory that stressed modernisation as a cornerstone to the United States' anti-Communist strategy.[136] Rusk encouraged foreign aid as an important part of the United States' positive strategy to counter underdevelopment. However, these threats were external threats and just as serious threats existed within the United States.

Rusk's world order was also threatened by internal forces that might undermine its foreign policy commitments. Policy makers could talk about fighting communists and creating programs, but if talk was not backed up by action it would be meaningless. Thus, pusillanimity could undermine the United States' commitment to maintain the world order. Threats to commitment were threats to the world order because the world order rested ultimately upon Americans willingness to back up its commitments. Rusk understood that if the United States as the leader of the "free world" was unwilling to fulfil its commitments no one else would take up the burden and its security would be threatened. Moreover, Rusk saw the United States commitment as indivisible. For Rusk, the commitment to Berlin was as important as the commitment to South Vietnam. Thus, Americans had to be educated to understand that their security rested upon the UN world order which could only be maintained, in large part, by the United States' commitment to it.

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[133]See Henry A. Kissinger, White House Years (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1979), p.69.
[134]In his inaugural address, Kennedy pointed out that America would have to compete with Communism, but that was not the sole justification for his programs. "...[N]ot because the communists may be doing it, not because we seek their votes, but because it is right."
[135] Walt Rostow, The View from the Seventh Floor (London: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 14.
[136]Gaddis, Strategies, p. 200.

For Rusk, the United States' commitment to South Vietnam transcended the immediate issue of North Vietnam's aggression. The issue was, at least to Rusk, a challenge to the United States' commitment to the world order based on the rule of law. For Kennedy, Vietnam was a test case for the possible success of Khrushchev's vaunted wars of national liberation. Rusk believed that the principles behind the Truman Doctrine and the UN Charter were under attack in Vietnam. If the United States was to defend those principles, it would have to expand its geopolitical focus. Its strategic focus had to shift away from its overemphasis on the Atlantic region and take into account the Pacific. Rusk shifted the geopolitical focus of the United States' foreign policy from the Atlantic to the Pacific in two interconnected ways. First, he stressed that the United States security was connected to the security of Southeast Asia. Second, Rusk extended the Truman Doctrine to Vietnam to support his policy.[137]

Rusk shifted the geopolitical focus for two reasons. The first reason was that Kennedy and Johnson, believed that the Communist threat had changed focus and was promoting wars of national liberation in the developing world.[138] The second reason was that the countries on the Pacific rim were becoming increasingly important trade partners.[139] Nuclear or conventional war by the Soviet Union remained a threat to the general peace so Europe remained a priority. However, the threat created by Khrushchev's speech, in January 1961, threatening wars of national liberation created a new theatre for conflict. As Peter Rodman argues, the European theatre was stalemated, as was the race for weapon superiority, leaving the only flank left as the developing world.[140] The third world became a new arena for the cold war conflict as both sides attempted to win the newly independent states into their camps. To add another level of urgency to the situation in Southeast Asia, Rusk believed that the People's Republic of China (PRC) was heavily involved in promoting the world revolution. China undertook this task because Mao believed the Soviets had failed to carry forward the world revolution.[141] Moreover, the Chinese Communists during the

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[137]See Cohen, Dean Rusk, p.128.
[138] Rodman, More Precious,
[139]Andrew Rotter, The path to Vietnam: origins of the American commitment to Southeast Asia (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987). Japan was an important ally and an important part of the world economy and it depended upon Southeast Asia.
[140] See Rodman, More Precious than Peace.
[141]See for example, Rusk's view on the Sino-Soviet "split". DOSB 16 March 1964. "The Chinese Communists have demanded that the Russians risk their national interests, and even their national survival, to promote the world revolution, as that cause is defined by Peiping. The rulers of the

early Kennedy years had increasingly denounced the Soviet Union for being soft on the West.[142] The PRC and the Soviet Union were competing to see which country would lead the Communist world revolution. In this competition, the wars of national liberation were a key concern. A litmus test, for the world revolution, was support for North Vietnam against American "Imperialism".[143] For the United States, Vietnam also represented the increased importance of the Pacific rim to the United States' foreign policy. The region had demonstrated increased economic growth and it was an important outpost for containing the Eurasian Communist threat.[144]

The Pacific rim became assumed a greater geopolitical importance when the Soviets tested their first atomic device in 1948, China's "fall" to Communist powers in 1949, and the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950. The Korean War had militarised the Cold war and it had changed the United States' strategic focus in the region.[145] Geoffery Sloan argues that America's response to the Korean War begins the geopolitical policy of "indiscriminate" globalism.[146] The geopolitical focus began to change when China "fell" to the communist and the United States undertook steps to contain a Communist China and the Communist threat on the Eurasian landmass. The first step was to aid those countries in the region that were resisting communism.[147] To resist communism, Sloan argues that the geopolitical strategic focus changed from a point strategy to a line or perimeter strategy.[148] Thus, when Rusk saw South Vietnam challenged, he saw a process that had begun with the fall of China and was appeared to be gathering momentum. What Rusk saw was more than the domino theory, he saw a world revolution.[149] The threat of world revolution was not simply about Vietnam but a threat to the world order of freedom which

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Soviet Union have rejected this doctrine. They appear to have begun to realise that there is an irresolvable contradiction between the demands to promote world communism by force and the needs and interests of the Soviet state and people."

[142] Gordon H. Chang, "China, JFK, and the Bomb," The Journal of American History 74, no. 4. (March, 1988): 1290.

[143] Chen Jian, "China's involvement in the Vietnam War 1964-1969," The China Quarterly 142 (June, 1995). 356-387.

[144] G.R. Sloan, Geopolitics in United States Strategic Policy, 1890-1987 (Wheatsheaf Books: London, 1988), p.158.

[145] See Gaddis, Strategies, pp. 109-113.

[146] Sloan, Geopolitics, p.143-144.

[147] Ibid., p. 142.

[148] See Douglas J. Macdonald, "The Truman Administration and Global Responsibilities: the birth of the falling domino," in Robert Jervis and Jack Snyder eds. Dominoes and Bandwagons: Strategic Beliefs and Great Power Competition in the Eurasian Rimland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) pp. 112-144.

[149] Rusk, As I Saw It, pp 495-496.

was a threat to the United States' security.[150] In other words, the United States had to undertake "indiscriminate globalism"[151]

In one form or another, Vietnam encapsulated most of the threats to Rusk's world order. North Vietnam waged indirect aggression against South Vietnam. Tied into that threat was the overarching threat of nuclear war. Nuclear war remained a threat and because the Soviets and the Chinese communist feared that the United States might invade North Vietnam to end the war. Policy makers in Washington feared that the war could escalate into a nuclear exchange.[152] The exact nature of North Vietnam's alliances with its two main allies, China and Russia, was not clear. Rusk was quite careful to reiterate that the United States did not want a wider war that would require the United States to invade North Vietnam. As he stated in later years, Rusk believed that an invasion would bring China into the conflict.[153] Vietnam also contained a threat to the United States' universal commitment to liberty when South Vietnam's survival was threatened. If North Vietnam conquered South Vietnam, Rusk believed it would be a victory for a world order based on coercion. In that regard, South Vietnam's defeat threatened to undermine the United States' commitment to a world order based upon the principles of the UN. Moreover, the defeat might signal that the United States' commitment to countering the Communist world revolution was, at best, weak. Rusk connected Vietnam's security to the United States' commitment to the rule of law, freedom, and, somewhat indirectly, its other commitments. The commitment to Vietnam challenged the United States by posing the question, to all citizens, how far they were willing to support abroad the principles that they lived by at home.

This lead us to the next major question: How did Rusk view the United States?

Section Two: Rusk's view of the United States

Dean Rusk's view of the United States was influenced, in large part, by his background and his belief in its institutions and ideals. In discussing Rusk's background, the goal is not to psychoanalyse him so that we may understand how his foreign policy developed, but to understand

[150]See for instance. DOSB 6 April 1964, p. 534 "We dare not falter. For unless the world is made safe for freedom, our own freedom cannot survive." and again DOSB 6 July 1964, p.3 "Today, we can be secure only to the extent that our total environment is secure--and by "total environment" I mean the land, waters, and earth of the entire world and adjacent areas of space."
[151]Sloan, Geopolitics, p. 150.
[152] Chen Jian, "China's involvement", pp 360-361.
[153]Rusk, As I Saw it, p. 456.

how he viewed the United States. Did he see the United States as exceptional or just like the rest of the world? What was it that it had to contribute to the world? These types of questions are what the section seeks to develop. As Rusk pointed out, a country demonstrates the principles of its regime by the goals of its foreign policy.[154] The United States' role in the world is discussed in the next section, but here we will explore what Rusk understood the United States to be and what its ideals and institutions meant.

Rusk's background reflected the United States before the Second World War and the influence that Roosevelt's New Deal legislation had on economic development. Rusk was born in Georgia in 1909 and remained close to his Southern roots. As a Southerner, Rusk was aware that he grew up in a region set apart from America by the Civil War. Rusk grew up in extreme poverty and his humble beginnings deeply influenced his view of America. Warren Cohen began his study of Dean Rusk with the following observation. "The poverty of Rusk's antecedents and the story of his rise are the stuff of which the American Dream is made."[155] Rusk, grateful for the blessings that the United States had conferred on him, sought to return the favour by exporting the American dream to the world. Cohen called Rusk's view of the United States' liberal exceptionalism.[156] According to the theory of liberal exceptionalism, the United States was a chosen country exempt from the Old World's corruption because of its founding in liberty. Its exceptionalism was tempered by liberalism to use its advantages for the betterment of man. The label, liberal exceptionalism, offers a first cut at how Rusk saw the United States, but his views are not that easy to categorise. Rusk understood that the United States had not developed without any antecedents and he recognised that it owed much to the British political traditions. However, Rusk did accept the idea that the United States was an example to the world. He believed that its institutions for example, limited government and the rule of law, could help the rest of the world. Rusk believed

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[154] See for example, Dean Rusk, The Winds of Freedom, ed. Ernest K. Lindley (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), pp. 1-9. See also Hadley Arkes, Bureaucracy, The Marshall Plan, and the National Interest (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 1972), p. 6. Arkes discusses how a regime embodies the rules, laws, and norms of a society.
[155] Cohen, Dean Rusk, p. 1.
[156] Cohen, Dean Rusk, p. 133. See Ernest Lee Tuveson, Redeemer nation: The Idea of America's Millenial role (London: University of Chicago Press, 1968); Anders Stephanson, Manifest Destiny : American Expansionism and the Empire of Right (New York: Hill & Wang, 1996). See also Albert K. Weinberg, Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansionism in American History (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1963).

that freedom was achievable for all men, not just Americans. Rusk did not speak directly on how he viewed the United States, but we can derive, from his foreign policy addresses, the principles that American foreign policy represented.

Rusk believed that the United States' foreign policy goals reflected its political principles. Rusk stressed these principles as themes within his foreign policy addresses. The first theme was the **American dream** and the possibility that all humanity could achieve the same dream. As mentioned above, Rusk's success embodied the American dream but what is important is that the American dream also represented the possibility of improvement or development for the world. The belief in the American dream was tied, more implicitly than explicitly, to Rusk's strong belief in **progress.**[157] Progress here refers to the general belief that man can better his situation by his own efforts and that the future holds improvements over the past. Rusk was not an outspoken believer in progress, or progress on all fronts, but he did reflect his time with the belief that man was able to take steps towards a better world. Rusk, however, did not believe simply that the world's problems were practical problems to be solved conclusively, but rather that man, through science and technology, could improve his lot. Progress was also derived from another central theme in Rusk's view of the United State, that it was the **great experiment in freedom.**[158] This theme reflected, to some extent the idea of liberal exceptionalism, but it also expressed Rusk's deep faith in and respect for the American founding. As Rusk would reiterate time and again, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are revolutionary documents in that they express the United States' revolution for freedom. Moreover, he would also stress that the United States' founding provided the basis for the UN charter. However, he was also aware that like all political experiments, the experiment in freedom could fail if the commitment to freedom was not supported. His commitment to freedom and the power of the ideas in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the United Nations charter reflected the strong streak of idealism. **Idealism** is another theme that Rusk stressed in his addresses. Americans often profess a strong ethos of pragmatism and the United States is often characterised as having a problem

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[157] Rusk had a limited view of progress and did not view everything as open to progress or that modern man was somehow improved morally to primitive man. Rather he expressed that underlying modern man's success, at peace and prosperity, was the ever present possibility that man could destroy those gains. See Schoenbaum, Waging Peace, p. 265.

[158] See for example, Rusk, As I Saw It, p. 532.

solving culture. However, the United States' founding also represents a strong belief in the revolutionary power of ideas and institutions to shape the human potential.

American Dream. Rusk believed in the American dream because as Warren Cohen pointed out, he had achieved it. He rose from poverty to become one of the most powerful men in the United States. He achieved the American dream at the same time that it was being transformed by World War Two. He would often stress the changes that the United States had undergone in his lifetime. The American dream was not limited to what Rusk had accomplished, but what the United States offered all of its citizens. He would point out that he grew up in a society that was "prescientific, pretechnical, premedical, prepublic health, preeducation--by present day standards".[159] He stressed the American dream in his addresses because its development represented a possible development model for other states to emulate. In that last function, Rusk believed that the American dream was a potent weapon in the ideological war with the Communist wars of national liberation.

The Kennedy and Johnson administrations, especially Johnson's, were going to expand the American dream, not only to all Americans, but to the world. To fulfil the promise, Johnson embarked upon a massive legislative program that would reshape the face of the United States. From Civil Rights to Medicaid, the government was attempting to reform America at the same time that the United States was waging war in Vietnam. The two missions reflected the dual nature of the United States' foreign policy. Johnson's foreign policy vacillated between winning hearts and minds, economic development, and an attrition strategy, waging war in Vietnam. Rusk and Johnson's emphasis on America's positive strategy reflected their faith in the American dream and the possibility that government could improve the average citizen's life. Both of these goals reflected a strong belief in progress.

Progress.[160] Robert Nisbet defines progress as the following. "The idea of progress holds that mankind has advanced in the past--from some aboriginal condition of primitiveness,

[159] Rusk, Winds of Freedom, p.8.
[160]While progress also contains a moral element, the meaning here is on economic grounds. Progress in the economic sphere does not imply progress in the moral sphere and Rusk would never equate the two. He would however, as noted below, stress the importance of the progress from one nation ruled by a government that derives its just powers from the consent of the governed to many nations following that principle. In that fashion, Rusk was a believer in political

barbarism, or even nullity--is now advancing, and will continue to advance through the foreseeable future."[161] Progress suggests that man, by a thorough control of nature, could, in the future, achieve a quantifiably and qualitatively improved society. Political and economic reforms would make the future better than the past. As Christopher Lasch and other commentators have pointed out, the idea of progress is a strong theme within American politics stretching back to the Puritans.[162] A well-known believer in the government's power to improve the life of the average citizen, was Franklin D. Roosevelt. His New Deal legislation carried a strong strand of progressivism by stressing the role government could play in improving the life of the average American. The belief that government could improve the life of the citizen was continued and expanded in the 1960s under Lyndon Johnson.

Lyndon Johnson and Dean Rusk had both grown up in poverty approaching that of the Third World countries. Each man had been able to transcend those humble beginnings and reach the pinnacle of political power. Both men shared an outlook, although Rusk was not as outspoken about it, that rested upon a vision of progress. Johnson, elected to Congress on the Roosevelt New Deal platform, had witnessed the government's power to make life better for people. As President, he sought to increase the power of government to improve the life of the citizen. In particular, Johnson's vision of progress was applied at home and abroad. The Great Society was not to be limited to the Untied States but should encompass the whole world. Johnson wished to share the United States' success and thus the underlying vision of progress with the rest of the world.[163] The United States' foreign policy after World War II carried with it the, implicit but often explicit, belief that by its actions it could make the world a better place.

As Secretary of State, Rusk acted with that belief in progress.[164] For example, he stressed the American model of development as an alternative to the Communist development model. Moreover, Rusk believed that economic progress and freedom went together. "We believe that freedom and progress are historic partners and that he alleged choice between rapid progress and

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progress. Moreover, Rusk also believed that economic progress and political progress went together.

[161]Nisbet, History of the Idea of Progress, p. 4.

[162] Christopher Lasch, True and Only Heaven : Progress and Its Critics (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991).

[163]Lyndon Johnson, My Hope for America (New York: Random House, 1964), p. 90.

[164] Rusk, Winds of freedom, p. 43.

free institutions is false."[165] Freedom produced economic progress and economic progress strengthened freedom. In that regard, progress was tied into another theme important to Rusk--freedom.

Great Experiment in Freedom. Rusk believed that the United States represented a great experiment in liberty. It was founded upon the idea that the government derived its just powers from the consent of the governed.[166] This idea was innovative and revolutionary. It was the first country to successfully implement the idea and from that success it soon took on a universal appeal. The experiment in liberty had succeeded and Rusk saw his mission as Secretary of State to continue that success and expand liberty's boundaries. As he would point out many times, the United States was a state were the government derived its just powers from the consent of the people.[167] Rusk sought to follow John F. Kennedy's inaugural directives. The United States would "pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of **liberty**." [Emphasis added.] The United States defended and promoted freedom because its founding principles were based upon the universal idea that all men had "the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." It was founded upon this powerful idea and it continued to survive so long as it kept those universal ideas alive. America was first an idea, but it was a very powerful idea because it contained a universal appeal. As Rusk would often point out, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution contained universal principles similar to those in the UN charter. Thus, the United States represented what was best in a particular regime, but also an example for the rest of the world.

Similarities with UN Charter. Rusk stressed that the United States presented the world with hope and because its regime embodied the rule of law. Rusk hoped that the world could achieve the rule of law through the UN. He emphasised the rule of law because of his strong belief in international law and the belief that it offered the best chance for all nations to live in peace. Moreover, Rusk saw the United States possessing the regime closest to the UN charter. The United States was dedicated to the ideas of liberty, equality before the law, and that the government

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[165] Ibid., p.17.
[166] The phrase comes from the United States of America Declaration of Independence and Rusk would refer to throughout his speeches.
[167] Rusk, Winds of freedom, p. 1

derived its just powers from the consent of the governed. These were new developments in world politics and made the United States' founding exceptional. In the same manner, the UN was exceptional because it attempted to codified juridical equality of all states before international law and resolve disputes by recourse to the law rather than to military force. The rule of law would create a stable world order based upon a shared concern for peace. In the same manner that equality before the law brought peace to a domestic setting, the UN offered the hope that such a possibility was possible in the international arena.

Rusk stressed the similarities between the founding principles of the United States and the UN..[168] The United States contained within its particular polity, the universal ideals that the UN attempted to promote. The United States, to a large degree, reflected the world that Rusk wanted to create, in particular the universalistic idea of the rule of law. That belief reflected another theme of how Rusk viewed the United States--idealism.

Idealism. Rusk knew that the United States was founded upon an idea, the idea that free men could come together and rule without force or fraud. From its beginning, the United States projected a strong strain of idealism as arising from that exceptional founding. Its promise developed from the belief that one's dreams could be achieved through persistence and determination. Idealism ran through the American experience and it fuelled the United States success because it fostered expectation that the future would be better. While Europeans, often viewed such idealism as naive, it had been vindicated in the founding and from that initial success the United States derived great strength.[169]

Rusk drew upon that idealism but he tempered with the knowledge that force might be needed to achieve the international order and to defend freedom. As mentioned above, Rusk was "actively" seeking to achieve his idealistic goals and thus he would use active "realist" measures.[170] His idealism contained an element of realism, but it was not an empty or pragmatic realism; rather

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[168] See for example, DOSB 30 December 1963, p. 993 and DOSB 28 October 1963, p.654-658.
[169]The failure in Vietnam became particularly dangerous because it threatened to undermine that idealism. America and American institutions escaped from Vietnam relatively unscathed, but the imbalance between the president and the congress, as exemplified in the War Powers legislation is an ongoing legacy of the war. See Gordon Silverstein, Imbalance of Powers: Constitutional interpretation and the making of American foreign policy, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).
[170] Stupak, Dean Rusk, p 18.

it was a realism driven by his pursuit of a UN based international order. He was not simply waiting for the United Nations to solve all the problems because he knew there may be cases when the United States would have to go it alone. That necessity made it all the more important that it possess militarily and economic strength and that its alliances and allies be strong as well. In sum, Rusk's philosophy was imbued with the United States' idealism and the idealism within the UN charter. His idealism gave added strength to his use of military force, because he was not using power for power's sake but to achieve a better world.

The United States was exceptional to the degree that it represented a founding in freedom. Rusk saw it as the new world and that its success demonstrated that one was not bound to the old world's pessimism. The old world was bound by its history. The past, by reminding the people of failures, kept them from pursuing future expectations. However, this is not to suggest that Rusk simply saw the United States as optimists and the Europeans as pessimists, but that he saw the pursuit of liberty offering the world the possibility of redemption. Rusk was not on a crusade, but he believed that the tide of history was turning to those who promoted freedom.[171] In essence, the United States had inaugurated a world revolution that was slowly gathering strength and soon the whole world might enjoy freedom. As Rusk would say, the winds of freedom are blowing through the world.[172] Thus, if liberty and progress were to succeed, America (the new world) would have to redeem, Europe (the old world).

Antecedents to a Machiavellian Moment.

While Rusk never spoke directly in such language, he did say that America was the guardian and promoter of liberty for the world. Rusk believed that America, in the role of freedom's defender, had shown its exceptionalism in how it handled its power. The United States was different from other states that had attained power.

> It is not of small significance--indeed it is of greatest historical importance--that the most powerful nation the world has known has not been seeking aggrandizement, that it has committed itself to protecting and promoting freedom for the human race as a whole. And this dedication may be the most significant single factor of the 20th century. Lord Acton once said that "power corrupts." If our friends from other countries would forgive a presumptuous remark, I believe the record since 1945 would indicate that Lord Acton needs some revision.

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[171] See for example, DOSB 4 June 1962, p.896.

[172] See Tony Smith, America's Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth Century, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

> Because the power in the hands of the American people, beginning in 1945, has not corrupted them in their basic purposes and commitments toward a decent world order.[173]

While the statements may appear self-serving, the United States' commitment to liberty introduces two points that are important for understanding the Machiavellian Moment. First, the idea of America as a redeemer nation and thus there are two worlds, the new, exceptional, and the old, mundane.[174] The second point follows from the first point, but is slightly different in that it focuses on Rusk's attempt, through American foreign policy and its idealism, to create a universal order.[175] What he attempted while pursuing liberty was to invert the duality suggested by Noble and Pocock and thereby eradicated it. Rusk saw the United States leading the fight for liberty and this fight would close the world wide divide between free and not free to create one world of freedom. One world would mean that the differences between the old world and the new had been ended and that the new world would be universal. In contrast, the theory of *realpolitik* emphasised man's fallen nature and man's unlimited quest for power. The pursuit of power made it impossible for any one state to remain idealistic, or above the need to purse power. Moreover, the pursuit of a world order would elicit reactions from other states to counter that bid for universality. In the end, *realpolitik* accepted the idea of one world, but it was a corrupt universality based upon the inevitable corrupting influence of power. Rusk saw the potential and the benefits from the rule of law. *Realpolitik* would suggest that as the United States would have to undertake adventures abroad and at home, to defend that power, that would undermine America's exceptionalism. The most immediate example was Vietnam as a demonstration that America's exceptionalism had ended. But had it? The United States was able to escape that war by insisting in the underlying principle had not been defeated and that it had fought for the right principles. Moreover, Nixon, by withdrawing, had exercised prudence that probably should have been exercised sooner. Critics believed that the necessity of power would require it to betray its founding principles. The United States almost did and would have if it had become an empire, but it left Vietnam before that

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173 Rusk. DOSB 9 March, 1964, p.361.

174 See Tuveson, Redeemer Nation, and David Noble, The End of American History: Democracy, Capitalism, and the Metaphor of Two Worlds in Anglo-American Historical Writing, 1880-1980 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985).

175 This is not to say that Rusk was the first to try to use American foreign policy in this manner, Woodrow Wilson springs to mind instantly, but only to argue that Rusk went the furthest towards this goal. He was aided by the globalist foreign policy framework that the United States had accepted after World War Two, but had only applied regionally.

became required.[176] This leads us to ask what did Rusk see the United States' role in the world to be?

Section Three: The United States' role in the world.

Rusk believed that the United States had a special role to play in the world and this section will sketch that role. The first, and overriding, goal for its foreign policy was to **defend the United States.** Beyond that primary goal, Rusk believed the United States had a special role to play in world affairs. That role reflected its ideals, its people and the world they faced. The material in this section addresses some of the material that Section one implied. In that sense, this section combines both section one, Rusk's World View, and section two, Rusk's vision of the United States, to find out what Rusk understood as the United States' role in the world.

The ideals found within the United States' political system led it to support and pursue a world based upon the principles in the first two articles of the UN charter. Rusk believed it had the central role in maintaining the general peace and creating a decent world order. Rusk's vision of the United States' role in the world had four main themes, but they were all bound up with its principle responsibility in the world--the defence of freedom.[177]

The **defence of freedom** was an overarching and universal theme. According to Rusk, the United States' goal of building a **decent world order** was a universal goal as was the defending freedom. He tied the two together by insisting that the United States was only secure when the world was secure and that America was free only when others were free.[178] That Rusk identified the United States' security with the security of the world was an important shift in foreign policy. To defend freedom meant that the United States had to help others to defend their freedom. The United States' founding principles enshrined the right for all men to be free and it had to fulfil that role in the world. The United States promoted and defended the **rule of law**, for as Rusk would

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[176] See Gardner, Pay any Price, p.253. Douglas Cater warned that America faced a long twilight war in Vietnam that might last 20 to 30 years.

[177]DOSB 20 July 1964, p. 77 "We owe these things [economic and social reforms] to ourselves. I am interested in them as a citizen, but also as Secretary of State. For whatever improves our national life also strengthens freedom in the world struggle in which we are engaged. We are the trustees, the leaders, of the cause of freedom. Our enemies rejoice in our blemishes. The friends of freedom, who are a great majority of mankind, expect us to set a splendid example."

[178]DOSB 8 February 1965, p. 166. "We have to be concerned with the whole world. We can be secure only to the extent that this planet is safe for freedom." See also DOSB 10 May 1965, p.699 and DOSB 28 June 1965, p.1032. See also DOSB 6 July 1964, p.3.

remark, where the rule of law extends, freedom is enlarged.[179] The first step in defending freedom was to stop communist aggression because they threatened a world revolution that would destroy the rule of law and replace it with the rule of force. The third goal was to **help allies defend themselves** and to strengthen them. The fourth goal was to help the newly independent states with **economic development.**

That the United States kept its commitment was considered by Rusk to be a pillar of world peace. The United States' support for its allies rested on the strength of its commitment to them. The commitment to South Vietnam was not a small matter for Rusk. As mentioned earlier, his world order and world peace depended upon the America's commitment. The war in South Vietnam represented a challenge to a decent world order and to world peace, and thus it was important that the United States keep its commitment. Speaking on a television news program, Rusk emphasised the importance of the commitment when he was asked whether the United States' prestige and honour were at stake in Vietnam.

> President Johnson has indicated that our honour is at stake here.... Wrapped up in this world "honour" is a matter of the deepest concern to the life and death of our nation--because it is very important, when the President of the United States makes a commitment and when he says something to those to whom we're opposed, that what he says is believed.
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> Now, we have a commitment to South Viet-Nam. We also have 42 allies. The integrity of that commitment is literally the principal pillar of peace in this present world situation. And if the other side should discover or think that they discover that the commitment of the United States is not worth very much, then the structure of peace begins to dissolve rapidly and we shall be faced with dangers we've never dreamed of.[180]

The United States' commitment to Vietnam also demonstrated the strength of its commitment to its allies. Its allies could see that the United States would support them just as much, if not more, as it had supported South Vietnam against communist aggression. However, the United States had more to offer than its commitment.

To support its commitments to freedom, a decent world order, and its allies, the United States had to be strong politically, economically, and militarily. It derived its greatest strength from its people and their support for its political ideals. The United States'' strength developed

[179]DOSB 22 March 1965, p. 399 "When we talk about "the rule of law," we are talking about the difference between rational behaviour and the regime of the jungle. We know that law enlarges the area of freedom by making it possible to predict with greater confidence the behaviour of others."
[180]DOSB 27 September 1965, p. 511 and p. 513.

from its commitment to its people, their freedom and dignity.[181] The United States derived its foreign policy from the American people and the world around them.[182] Its political strength was its commitment to freedom and the belief that a government derived its just power from the consent of the governed. The economic strength was fed by America's immense industrial and agricultural resources. Its military strength was awesome, but Rusk knew that the United States could only succeed if its allies were strong. Thus its military strength reassured its allies and the United States extended military aid to the newly independent states. A further method for strengthening the free world against the communist aggression was foreign aid to the newly independent states.

The United States' willingness to help the newly independent states derived in large part from the Communist challenge, but it also stemmed from its commitment to freedom.

> Foreign aid remains, as it has been throughout the post-war period, an indispensable instrument of our foreign policy. We would wish to help these countries even if there were no such thing as a cold war. But the Communist threat makes our aid imperative if freedom is to survive and ripen in vast areas of the world. And surely it is better to save freedom by helping new nations get on their feet than to wait until it can be saved only by committing American youths to combat[183].

Rusk constantly stressed foreign aid as being important to the United States' foreign policy and that it cost the American taxpayer pennies to support. Along with foreign aid, it acted as a model for economic development that the newly independent states could follow. As an economic model, the United States offered an alternative to the Communist model. Not only was the struggle in the third world social, political, and military, but it was also economic. As a result, Rusk spent extensive time testifying before congress on foreign aid to newly independent states.[184]

The final theme, implicit throughout Dean Rusk's foreign policy philosophy, was the United States' commitment to creating a decent world order based upon the principles of the UN charter. The defence of freedom, the commitment to allies, the economic, political, and military strength, and foreign aid, were all designed to make the world a better place for all.

Conclusion.

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[181]DOSB 22 March 1965, p. 399. "The goals and our policies grow out of our interests as a nation and our basic commitment to the people--commitment to freedom and human dignity."
[182]DOSB 5 October 1964, p. 463.
[183]DOSB 17 August 1964, p. 217.
[184] Rusk testified thirty two times before Congress on behalf of foreign aid. See Transcript Oral History Interview III Tape 1 1/2/1970 by Paige E. Mulhollan, Internet Copy, LBJ Library. p. 28.

Dean Rusk's foreign policy philosophy was based upon strong universalistic principles. The principles stemmed from his belief in four interconnected ideas. The first major idea was that the **rule of law** should govern the relations between states and that the United States' foreign policy should be directed to create a world order based upon those principles. Rusk believed that he was fulfilling the universal principles that guided the United States from its founding. The universal ideas enshrined in the United States Constitution and the Declaration of Independence guided American behaviour at home and abroad. These documents were the main philosophical guides to his foreign policy. The second major idea was that Rusk sought to create, with **The United States' universal ideas** and through American foreign policy, a decent world order. However, Rusk stressed that he was not simply carrying out an American world order, but a universal order enshrined in the UN charter. The UN charter contained the universal principles based in large part on the universal ideas in the American founding and the UN system embodied the rule of law world order that he sought to create. The **UN world order** is the third major idea that supported Rusk's universal principles. In defending the UN world order, Rusk, and the United States, that kept the world safe. It acted in support of a world order that it helped to bring into existence, but that which all states had subscribed. Rusk pursued the world order to defend the United States' liberty. He believed that the United States' liberty was connected to the defence of liberty worldwide and that peace in the world meant peace for the United States. The rule of law found in the UN charter helped to protect and promote that liberty. As a result, Rusk's **geopolitical** commitments increased. He believed that the United States had a world wide commitment to supporting freedom and the rule of law. The United States, as the premier defender of the rule of law, had to intervene where ever freedom was threatened by Communist world revolution. The global threat from the Communist revolution required the United States to expand its geopolitical focus from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The focus now included many of the recently de-colonised states. The world wide threat from the Communist revolution and **the United States' geopolitical response** to defend and promote its revolution in liberty was the fourth major idea supporting Rusk's universal principles. The Cold War had entered a new phase and Rusk expanded American foreign policy to cover the newly emerging states. To achieve this task, Rusk relied upon the fifth major idea, **collective security**. Collective security was based upon a belief

that all states were threatened when one state was attacked. Rusk believed that the United States' commitment to collective security required it to fight in Vietnam. He was influenced by previous failures in collective security. Moreover, Rusk feared that the failure to live up to the commitment would undermine the credibility of the United States' other commitments. In sum, Rusk believed that the United States, guided by its universalistic principles, had a commitment to defend liberty around the world. Without that commitment, Rusk believed that a main pillar of peace in the world would be lost. Thus, when that commitment was challenged, as it was in Vietnam, Rusk invoked the United States' commitment to liberty, the UN charter, and the rule of law in support.

Rusk and the United States' commitment to Vietnam, was not simply indiscriminate globalism in geopolitical terms. Rusk was creating a massive, if logical, shift in the United States' foreign policy philosophy. Rusk fulfilled the language of the Truman Doctrine, and Johnson's Great Society, by extending it beyond Europe. However, that only tells the geopolitical story. Rusk widened the United States geopolitical focus to include the Pacific but he also attempted to create and defend, through his foreign policy, a world order. Rusk and Johnson departed from the prudent calculations in the Truman and Eisenhower years. They tried to match United States policy to its rhetoric. This suggests that Rusk not only believed Kennedy's inaugural address but it showed how far his foreign policy departed from the post-World War Two foreign policy tradition. The United States was required to fulfil the promise of its founding and the UN's founding by supporting the UN charter and the UN world order. The United States could not shrink from the global struggle, for in the language Kennedy and Rusk had used the failure to support freedom was to oppose it. Thus, Rusk undertook a task that while in the best spirit of the United States, was beyond her immediate capabilities. The Vietnam War severely damaged the United States' commitment to that ideal of the world order.

Rusk's foreign policy philosophy exemplifies the philosophical context, based on the Truman Doctrine's universalism, surrounding Johnson's decision to increase the United States' military involvement in South Vietnam. The next chapter explores Johnson's fateful troop decision, its context, and the three years of conflict that ensued.

Chapter Three: Lyndon Johnson and the Machiavellian Moment.

On 28 July 1965, Lyndon Johnson committed the United States to an undeclared ground war in Vietnam. Even though Johnson wanted to keep the war limited, the commitment grew over the next three years and it changed the United States. The Vietnam war damaged the United States' economy, weakened its international prestige, divided the American public, changed the United States' foreign policy and force Johnson to withdraw from the 1968 presidential campaign. Johnson committed the United States to an undeclared war in Vietnam because he believed that the war's costs were manageable both politically and economically.[185] He believed that the United States could sustain the undeclared war and carry out the extensive domestic reforms in the Great Society legislation because the United States was strong enough, rich enough, and committed enough. Moreover, he pursued the limited war[186] because the alternatives: withdrawal, letting South Vietnam be defeated by North Vietnam, or escalating by declaring war, would have unacceptable political consequences both domestically and internationally. By choosing a middle path, Johnson sought a policy that would limit the United States' involvement without giving into either extreme. The strategy was designed to keep international issues from undermining his domestic policies while at the same time keeping criticism of his domestic programs from undermining his foreign policy. Johnson's firm belief that his domestic policies and his foreign policy were interrelated supported his middle path strategy.

As Lloyd Gardner suggested in Pay Any Price, Lyndon Johnson faced conflicting pressures from his domestic critics over the United States' involvement in Vietnam. Johnson wanted to find a way to satisfy both sets of critics.[187] Critics of his domestic reforms wanted the

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[185] Johnson believed he could pay for the war and the great society at the same time. For example, see Donald F. Kettl, "The Economic Education of Lyndon Johnson: Guns, Butter, and Taxes," in Robert A. Divine ed. The Johnson Years. Volume 2 Vietnam, the Environment, and Science (Lawrence Kansas: University Press of Kansas 1987), pp. 54-78. Of particular interest is p.54 where Kettl points out that at the time guns and butter seemed possible and p. 58 where Kettl cites Gardner Ackley's 30 July 1965 memo. In the memo Ackley suggests that there is room in the economy to handle a defence build up.
[186] See Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Lyndon B. Johnson 1965 vol. I (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1966), pp. 794-803. (Hereafter PPP LBJ)
[187] Lloyd C. Gardner, Pay Any Price: Lyndon Johnson and the wars for Vietnam (Chicago: I.R. Dee, 1995). See also Joseph A. Califano, Jr., The Triumph and the Tragedy of Lyndon Johnson: the White House Years (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), pp. 37, 106-114. See also Lyndon B. Johnson, The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the presidency, 1963-1969 (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1972), p. 443.

United States to stand firm against the communist threat while critics of the war wanted him to avoid involvement and to concentrate on domestic issues. Johnson did not want to let down either group. Just as he had done so often in domestic politics, he sought a middle path that would be a point of minimum consensus between the extremes. He believed that such a middle path consensus could be maintained if he pursued an undeclared limited war. The goal was to do enough in Vietnam to satisfy his domestic critics without alarming the people by demanding too much for the war and thereby he could placate his war critics. In this approach, Johnson combined hope and faith in the United States' capabilities in fighting for Vietnam with the fear and belief that the failure to fight in Vietnam would doom his Great Society programs.[188]

Johnson believed that he could not get support for domestic reforms if he appeared to be giving into Communist aggression. He feared being blamed for the "loss" of South Vietnam. At the same time, he worried that if he appeared to be fighting an overseas war while ignoring the demands of the Great Society he would be criticised for betraying his domestic policies. To overcome this dilemma, Johnson relied on his political skill of finding a middle path between two policy extremes. This skill had brought him great domestic political success, but at this highest level, the policies that had to be balanced proved insufficient. The over reliance on his ability to balance conflicting policies led to Johnson's greatest failure and brought the United States to the brink of a Machiavellian Moment.

Lyndon Johnson, always an ambitious politician, valued a successful deal over a failed stand on principle. Unless absolutely necessary, he preferred to maintain his political freedom of action. As a result, he succeeded by cautiously avoiding any commitment to what might be considered an extreme position, which might limit his political flexibility. A policy extreme would be any position that would require inflexibility and deny Johnson the freedom of action for bargaining and manipulating. His commitment to an undeclared war in Vietnam followed this pattern. He chose the middle path of an undeclared war, in part, because he believed that it would allow him to maintain his political flexibility at home and abroad. In particular, he was determined to counter the domestic critics of his efforts to defend South Vietnam. Ironically, the search for

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[188] See Johnson's 1966 State of the Union address where he stated America could have a Great Society and keep its international commitments. (PPP LBJ Vol. 1 1966) pp. 3-12.

flexibility led to a commitment that trapped Johnson between two irreconcilable goals: reform at home and war abroad. The war focused the country outward towards its foreign policy commitments and reforms focused the country inward towards its commitments to the people.

To balance the competing foreign and domestic policies, Johnson chose a middle path of a limited war. The middle path strategy was reflected at two levels. In Vietnam, Johnson tried to find a middle path between two policy extremes: escalation, widening the war, and withdrawal. He would escalate the conflict within South Vietnam without widening the war. At a more general level, Johnson pursued a middle path between the war abroad and reforms at home because he believed that the United States had to face both its international and domestic duties. To reconcile those competing demands, he pursued a limited war strategy that would allow him to reconcile his commitment to Vietnam and his commitment to the Great Society.[189]

The 28 July 1965 decision to embark on a limited war marked a turning point for Johnson's presidency, the United States' foreign policy, and the United States. The decision trapped Johnson on a debilitating middle ground between war and reform. He was unable to win the war and unable to focus on domestic reforms but at the same time unwilling to sacrifice either goal. The war, and the economic problems it created, crippled his presidency. The decision and its consequences changed United States' foreign policy because it meant that the United States was identifying its security with the security of a world order. The decision melded cold war rhetoric and foreign policy together. For Johnson, and in particular Dean Rusk, the decision was a logical consequence of the Truman Doctrine. The United States was undertaking a war to defend the world order outlined in the Truman Doctrine and the UN charter. Thus, Johnson did not believe that he was departing from the post-World War Two foreign policy framework. He believed he was simply fulfilling the commitments created and continued by previous presidents and that "the bill had come due" during his tenure. As he said, "We did not ask to be guardians at the gate, but there is no one else."[190] For Walter Lippmann and other critics of United States' foreign policy, the nightmare of a foreign policy of globalism had come true.[191] The United States had undertaken

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[189] Johnson, The Vantage Point, p. 324 and p. 443.
[190] See PPP LBJ Vol. 2. 1965 p. 794.
[191] See Ronald Steel, Walter Lippmann and the American Century (Boston, Massachusetts: Little, Brown, 1980) and Hans Morgenthau, Vietnam and the United States (Washington (D.C.): Public Affairs Press 1966).

a war to fulfil its global responsibilities beyond its resources or its security needs.[192] Lyndon Johnson, guided by a world view that was shaped by the failures of Munich and reinforced by his principle foreign policy advisor, accepted the duty to defend the free world.[193]

The 28 July 1965 decision brought the United States to the brink of a Machiavellian Moment.[194] As long as the United States remained committed to an undeclared war in South Vietnam, it rested on the brink of empire. Even as Rusk reiterated that the United States was fighting to defend the UN world order, he also accepted that the United States had identified its security with the security of that world order.[195] In the past, the United States had committed itself to supporting the UN world order as a member of the world order. In Vietnam, the United States defended that world order as an American world order. In other words, the United States was fighting without a UN mandate even though it had created and tried to work within the UN framework. To defend the world order that it was building, the United States appeared to be undertaking an "imperial" war. This does not mean that the United States was an empire or acting imperially, but that by defending a world order unilaterally, the United States had identified itself with the world order. The problem was not so much the war, but the political context around the war. The Machiavellian Moment was brought on by the tension between the world order and the domestic political order. The undeclared war brought the United States to the brink of the Machiavellian Moment and the brink of empire because of its disruptive effect on the American regime. First, the undeclared war shifted in the balance of power between the executive and the legislative branches. Second, the war created an imbalance between the domestic economy and the international economy. Third, the undeclared war created an imbalance between the domestic programs and foreign policy commitments. In sum, these imbalances are a threat to balanced government within the republican regime and, as such, they exemplify indirect steps towards empire.

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[192]Steel, Walter Lippman, pp. 564-566, 576-577.
[193]Orrin Schwab, Defending the Free World: John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and the Vietnam War, 1961-1965 (London: Praeger Studies in Diplomacy and Strategic Thought Praeger, 1998).
[194]An example of America's liberal internationalism can be seen in the number of volunteers for the Peace Corps. In 1965 and 1966, the number of participants peaked. It has never matched those levels even thirty years later. Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman, All you need is love : the Peace Corps and the spirit of the 1960s (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998) p. 262.
[195] See PPP LBJ 1965 7 April 1965 p. 395, 397-398.

Declaring and fighting a war focuses the domestic economic and political resources on external matters, in this case an American world order, rather than domestic matters, reforms within the republic. In fighting an undeclared war, Johnson attempted to balance both international demands and domestic demands and, in doing so, he brought the United States to the brink of a Machiavellian Moment. The United States faced the question--Republic or Empire?

To understand how 28 July 1965 decision created the Machiavellian Moment for the United States, the chapter makes two interconnected claims.[196] The **first claim** is that Johnson was a failed foreign policy "Prince" and that failure contributed directly to the fateful 28 July 1965 decision.[197] A failed foreign policy "Prince" implies that Johnson failed to heed Machiavelli's advice in Chapter 18 of the Prince. A prince must be at times a lion and a fox and must know when to be one or the other. Franklin Roosevelt would be an example of a successful foreign policy "Prince". He understood the need to balance domestic and foreign policy realms and he was aware that necessity might force him to concentrate on one realm and ignore the other. Such a necessity was the onset of World War Two where Roosevelt had to move from domestic reforms, Dr. New Deal, (the fox) to foreign affairs, Dr. Win the War, (the lion). Ironically, Lyndon Johnson who wanted to surpass Roosevelt as a president, failed to understand how Roosevelt moved from balancing the two policy realms to choosing one over the other when faced by the necessity. Johnson failed because he attempted to create a balance between competing policies. He tried to balance the war abroad and the reforms at home. The attempt created an imbalance within the

[196] The chapter focuses on the political philosophical context for the decision rather than offering a comprehensive account of the decision. Several excellent diplomatic histories already exist of that tumultuous month. See for example, William C. Gibbons, The U.S. Government and the Vietnam War Part III: January-July 1965 (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989); Orrin Schwab, Defending the Free World: John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and the Vietnam War, 1961-1965 (London: Praeger Studies in Diplomacy and Strategic Thought, 1998) especially chapter five; Larry Berman, Planning a Tragedy: The Americanization of the War in Vietnam (New York: W.W. Norton, 1982); Brian VanDeMark Into the Quagmire: Lyndon Johnson and the Escalation of the Vietnam War (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Lloyd C. Gardner, Pay Any Price: LBJ and the wars for Vietnam (Chicago: Ivan Dee, 1995). What this chapter seeks to do, which these accounts do not do, with the exception of Scwhab's book, is to put the decision within a philosophical framework to understand how the decision and its outcome changed the United States' foreign policy.

[197] See Harvey C. Mansfield Jr., Taming the Prince: The Ambivalence of Modern Executive Power (John Hopkins University Press, 1993). See also Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince (Rethinking the Western Tradition) trans. and ed. Angelo M. Codevilla (London: Yale University Press, 1997) Chapter 18. In particular, Machiavelli stressed the point that a prince had to be able to adapt his approach as necessity required. The need to find a middle path by balancing the duality see Chapters 15-19. These chapters focus on the statecraft required of a successful prince.

American regime. The tragedy is that Johnson's greatest strength as a domestic politician was his greatest foreign policy flaw: his ability and desire to find a workable consensus, a middle path, between two extreme positions.

The **second claim** is that 28 July 1965 decision created an imbalance within the United States, between the commitment to the republic's universal principles and its defence and promotion of those principles abroad. The second claim takes Johnson's political character flaws and connects them, through the 28 July 1965 decision, to the crisis of the Machiavellian Moment. Section two focuses on the decision's immediate context by looking three interrelated problems: One, the imbalance between foreign policy and domestic policy; Two, the constitutional consequences stemming from the undeclared war; Three, the economic imbalance created by the decision. When Johnson refused to reconcile the imbalance he brought the United States to the brink of a Machiavellian Moment. The imbalance can be seen in three areas: United States foreign policy, the constitutional executive-legislative balance, and the economy.

Section 1. Lyndon Johnson as the failed foreign policy Prince.

This section discusses Lyndon Johnson's foreign policy failings and it is not designed to be a full discussion of his personality, political life, or political legacy. Even though Lyndon Johnson has been the subject of several well-known biographies, none fully explain this "flawed giant".[198] In many ways Lyndon Johnson remains elusive. The goal here is not to duplicate or surpass those efforts, but to focus on Johnson's political character and the specific strengths and weakness that influenced his foreign policy decision of 28 July 1965. Moreover, the thesis is not concerned with the psychological sources of Johnson's character. The goal is to discern how his political character contributed to his approach to politics and his decision making process.

Lyndon Johnson's flawed personality or a psychological flaw did not create the Vietnam War. His approach to politics and his decision making style, shaped how he saw the consequences of 28 July 1965, and this led him to make the fateful, flawed decision. Even as we avoid one

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[198]The phrase is the title of Robert Dallek's biography of Johnson. Robert Dallek, Flawed Giant: Lyndon Johnson and his times 1961-1973 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). See also Paul K. Conkin, Big Daddy from the Pedernales: Lyndon Baines Johnson (Boston Twayne 1986); Doris Kearns, Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream (London: Deutsch, 1976). For a psychohistorical approach see Hyman L. Muslin and Thomas H. Jobe, Lyndon Johnson: the tragic self a psychohistorical portrait (New York: Plenum Press, 1991).

extreme, we should not go to the other extreme by arguing that Lyndon Johnson was fated to intervene in Vietnam and that his choice was determined for him. The historical evidence argues against this point. Johnson agonised over the decision and constantly tried to find some way to avoid it or solve it.[199] Perhaps a central problem was that Johnson wanted to maintain as much control as possible, even after the decision was made, to maintain his political flexibility.[200] Ironically, the same characteristics that made Lyndon Johnson so successful as a domestic politician failed him as a foreign policy "Prince."[201] Johnson had a choice, but, for a variety of reasons both internal and external, he chose poorly.

A failed foreign policy "Prince" means that Johnson failed to heed Machiavelli's advice on the proper balance a Prince should maintain if he is to succeed. Even though Machiavelli is mainly known for his concern for "domestic" politics, his writings do contain references and advice for "foreign policy". For example, his well-known demand that a Prince match his character to fit the circumstances can be applied to foreign policy.[202]

In Chapter 15 of The Prince, Machiavelli argues that a prince must be able to be not good or good according to necessity. The prince, in other words, must find a middle path between such apparently contradictory qualities. A prince, if he is to succeed, must learn how to bend his character to fit the necessity of the situation. A failed middle path often resulted from a failure to be bold and innovative. If a prince is cautious when he should be bold, he will fail. When a prince, out of necessity, has to take an extreme position, he must be prepared to use necessity to make an extreme position appear to be a moderate middle path. The key to success is finding the right balance by adapting to the situation as necessity dictates.

In Chapter 18, Machiavelli suggests that a prince must know how, when, and to what extent to use the means necessary to succeed.

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[199] See Henry William Brands, Jr. "Johnson and Eisenhower: The President, the Former President and the War in Vietnam" Presidential Studies Quarterly 15 (1985): 589-601.
[200] See Johnson, The Vantage Point; Berman, Planning a Tragedy.
[201] The failed prince would be one who did not successfully blend or choose when to be the fox and the lion. In other words, a leader who had failed to adopt the different qualities that were required at different times. Doris Kearns, American Dream, p. 285 makes a similar point when she talks about how Johnson's political skills failed him at this critical point.
[202] The whole of The Prince is dedicated to the theoretical question of ruling a polity, but chapters 15-19 and chapter 18 in particular, focus on the attributes necessary for a successful Prince.

> You therefore must know there are two kinds of fighting, the one with laws, the other with force: the first is proper to man, the second to beasts: but because many times the first does not suffice, it is expedient to recur to the second. Therefore, it is necessary for a prince to know well how to use the beast and the man.[203]

The choice is further complicated. The prince must choose which type of beast he must become. The prince must be able to move between the fox and the lion. To rely upon one or the other exclusively will lead to ruin. What is required is a proper mix of choosing according to the necessity of the situation. A leader successful at this art of choosing the fox and the lion as necessary was Franklin Roosevelt. Roosevelt understood that he had to move from domestic reforms, Dr. New Deal, (the fox) to foreign affairs, Dr. Win the War, (the lion) when faced by the necessity of World War Two.

Lyndon Johnson failed because he pursued a middle path that appeared to be moderate but was actually extreme. If the middle path he chose was to succeed, he had to make the bold, courageous, but difficult, choice between war and reforms. A man of lesser ambition would have chosen smaller reforms or a smaller war effort. Instead, Johnson, not a man of small ambition, attempted to have both. The failure was not that he attempted great goals, an archer only hits far targets if he aims above them, but that he failed to avoid the choice. When confronted with the choice, he failed to find the proper balance between the alternative policies.[204] He failed to realise that the policies he tried to balance were not on parallel or converging paths, but were on diverging paths. In other words the domestic reforms were pulling the country inward, while the war was pushing the country outward. He believed that the United States was powerful enough and wealthy enough to achieve both and he believed in his ability to balance the competing goals. In a political and economic sense he believed that the United States could grow fast enough to meet both goals. In the economic sphere, he thought he could afford the war and the reforms if the United States economy grew fast enough.[205] In the political sphere, Johnson expanded the republic through the civil rights legislation. That Johnson succeeded to balance the competing costs in both realms for

[203] Machiavelli, Prince, chapter 18.
[204] On the example of the prudent archer see Machiavelli, Prince, Chapter 6.
[205] On this analysis of the economy, see Tom Riddell, "The Vietnam War and Inflation Revisited" Chapter 14 in Bernard J. Firestone and Robert C. Vogt, eds. Lyndon Baines Johnson and the Uses of Power, (Contributions in Political Science, Number 221) (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), p. 225. The Vietnam war took place at a time when the United States economy was booming and Johnson had helped to create that boom with a tax cut in 1965.

three years is a testament to his political skills and the country's vast resources. However, his ambition and pride led to his failure because he did not see that the policies could not be achieved at the same time, because the United States could not sustain the growth economically and politically necessary to achieve the goals. In the end, both realms suffered a backlash because the divide between the two goals could only be straddled for a limited time before the day of reckoning arrived.

The three general reasons for Johnson's failure as a foreign policy prince were: foreign policy inexperience, an overconfidence in his political skills, and the belief that foreign and domestic policies could not be separated. These flaws were exacerbated by his decision making style.

Foreign Policy Inexperience

Johnson's foreign policy inexperience contributed to his failure in Vietnam. His inexperience had two important consequences. First, he reacted to the turmoil surrounding his ascension to office by seeking continuity. As a result, he relied upon previous policies rather than seeking to innovate and chart new policies. Second, Johnson possessed great pride and ambition. He wanted to be elected president and he tried to avoid anything that might jeopardise that possibility. At the same time he wanted to make his own mark as president. The combination of the two positions into one, ambitious continuity, represents Johnson's conflicted nature. He wanted to continue Kennedy's policies, but he wanted to do it better than Kennedy. Thus, he departed from Kennedy's policies not in their content but in their execution. The conflict between his pride and his desire for continuity was exacerbated by his foreign policy inexperience. As a result of the inexperience and his desire for continuity, Johnson's foreign policy decision making style that emphasised gradualism through the search for a middle path between policy extremes. As we will see below, a closer examination of that system reveals that the search for the middle path often became a policy of "muddling through". This approach allowed Johnson to emphasise the appearance of continuity by stressing the incremental steps in a policy development and this allowed him to avoid any appearance of having a major policy change.

Johnson was thrust unexpectedly into the presidency by Kennedy's assassination. After Kennedy's death, Johnson wanted to maintain continuity to reassure America and its allies. The

desire to maintain continuity included Kennedy's Vietnam policy. Kennedy's Vietnam legacy would indirectly shape Johnson's 28 July 1965 decision. By pursuing continuity, Johnson burdened himself with Kennedy's policies without necessarily understanding the internal logic of the policy. On the surface, Johnson accepted the broad intentions within Kennedy's Vietnam policy, defending South Vietnam, but he did not have an understanding of the assumptions or intentions that were behind Kennedy's decisions. Johnson did not have a chance to discover these nuances because he believed that he had to uphold Kennedy's Vietnam policy. This decision locked him into a policy that he might have wanted to reconsider if the circumstances had been different.

Johnson's desire for **continuity** was reinforced by the fear that if he appeared to be diverging from John F. Kennedy's policy he would be accused by Robert Kennedy of betraying that legacy. Johnson was acutely sensitive to the possibility of these charges and he feared that Robert Kennedy and other Kennedy supporters would criticise him at the first sign of deviation.[206] The fear of recriminations influenced in part the decisions on the United States' commitment to Vietnam that he made immediately after Kennedy's assassination. Johnson had the opportunity to reconsider the commitment because of the unsettled situation in Vietnam created by the assassinations of Diem and Kennedy. However, Johnson's desire for continuity, his belief in the cold war assumptions behind the policy, and the foreign policy advice he received contributed to his decision to maintain the commitment.

A more personal reason for continuity was that Johnson wanted to be president in his own right. To ensure his best chances in the 1964 election, he wanted to avoid anything that might distract the public. In this regard, the desire for continuity on Vietnam was also connected to Johnson's pride and ambition. We can see Johnson's pride and determination demonstrated in the following incident. Johnson met, the day after Kennedy's funeral, with Ambassador Lodge, who

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[206] See Kearns, American Dream, p. 254 See also Moya Ann Ball, "The Phantom of the Oval Office: The John F. Kennedy Assassination's Symbolic Impact on Lyndon B. Johnson, His Key Advisers and the Vietnam Decision Making Process" Presidential Studies Quarterly 24, no. 1 (Winter, 1994): 105-119.

had just returned from Vietnam. At that meeting Johnson said: "He did not become President just to see South Vietnam go the way of China."[207]

Johnson came to the Presidency inexperienced in foreign policy. David Bruce, the American ambassador to Britain, after meeting with Johnson on 10 February 1965 made the following observation. Johnson was "quite adept at the use of power in domestic politics, has been considering carefully how to exercise it in international affairs."[208] Bruce was not alone in making these observations and Johnson was acutely aware of his short comings in foreign policy.[209] Johnson, however, felt unsure in foreign policy and he often appeared out of his depth. In a rather evocative and colourful passage, Philip Geyelin compared Johnson to a riverboat captain unsure of the open seas of the international arena.[210]

Johnson's foreign policy inexperience was exacerbated by his apparent inability to understand the fundamental difference between domestic and international politics. Domestic politics, where Johnson excelled, is based upon Co-Operation and a shared common ground. Domestic issues are rarely indivisible. Johnson's political training and his political experience taught him to seek out and find the middle ground, to divide an issue so that both parties gained something. International politics, however, where Johnson was inexperienced, is based upon conflict and a common ground is difficult to find. Most issues are seen as indivisible. Life between countries is not the same as life within countries.[211] Individuals consent to giving up some of their sovereignty in exchange for certain political benefits. States, on the other hand, rarely allow their sovereignty to be compromised in such a manner.

Although power is the main currency in both realms, power in the domestic setting is not the same as power in the international setting. Johnson appeared not to understand how the different arenas required different types of power. Johnson understood power as a domestic politician. In domestic politics, where reasoned debate can occur, power is displayed as legitimate authority that seeks to persuade rather than coerce. The domestic arena is characterised by consent

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207 Tom Wicker, LBJ and JFK: the influence of personality upon politics (New York: Morrow 1968), p 208.
208 FRUS 1964-1968 Vol. II Vietnam January-June 1965, p. 213.
209 See Dallek, Flawed Giant, pp. 84-91, Geyelin, Lyndon B. Johnson, pp. 15-21.
210 Geyelin, Lyndon B. Johnson, p. 15.
211 See Stanley Hoffman, Primacy or World Order: American foreign policy since the Cold War (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978), p.107.

and the international arena by coercion. For example, the United States Constitution represents the fundamental "rules" for politically legitimate behaviour within the state. The international arena does not have such a set of "rules" and is therefore anarchic. Domestically, if a leader had to resort to force his policy had already failed. In international politics, military power is the trump card. Johnson's apparent uncertainty over the uses for military power suggests that he did not understand fully how power in international politics differed from power in the domestic realm.

> [Johnson] possessed of an extraordinary feel for power, he had devoted a lifetime to its political application. But he always seemed uncomfortable in its military use. His first inclination was to avoid it, the second to overdo it, not because he relished the dispatch of Marines,... but in part because he wanted to give those troops he did dispatch the best possible odds in their favor.[212]

The misunderstanding hampered his foreign policy and contributed, in part, to his choice of a flawed middle path in Vietnam.

Johnson had spent his entire political life on domestic politics. Even when his experience touched on foreign affairs, he was on the Senate Armed Services committee and as Senate majority leader he worked closely with Eisenhower, his experience was from the perspective of domestic politics. A direct and debilitating consequence of Johnson's inexperience was that it kept him from trusting his political judgement in foreign affairs as he would on domestic politics. As Kearns pointed out, Johnson did not have the experience to grasp the nuances of an international situation in the way he could with domestic politics.[213] To overcome his inexperience, he fell back on principles rather than his judgement to guide his thinking.

Johnson's inexperience in foreign policy exacerbated the flaws in his decision making style. The first flaw was that Johnson focused on short term issues. He was not concerned with the long term policies or the philosophy behind an issue. For example, he was concerned with getting a housing bill passed rather than discussing the housing issue. Johnson was acting in a crisis management mode. This approach to policy making would have a large impact on his approach to handling the limited war in Vietnam. Johnson could immerse himself in all the policy details and consequences and for a short time he could feel in control. As a result he often lacked on overall vision for the policy beyond broad general goals. Johnson often pursued his Great Society

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[212] Geyelin, Lyndon B. Johnson, p. 21.
[213] Kearns, American Dream, p. 256.

legislation in a near chaotic manner. As Conkin pointed out, Johnson emphasised submitting and passing the Great Society legislation, rather than focusing on implementing and funding the programs.[214] The short term outlook reflected his concern for short term gains. Doris Kearns called Johnson's style the politics of haste.[215] As we will see in section two, Johnson often failed to see how his short term solution caused long term problems.

In summary, Johnson's **inexperience** created several problems. First, it denied him the overwhelming knowledge that he employed on domestic policies. Second, the pursuit of incremental choices in foreign policy stressed the need for agreement among his foreign policy advisers. This problem can be seen in the debates between 1 July to 28 July where Johnson tries to reconcile the policy positions without appearing to ignore Ball's advice.[216] Third, Johnson's style assumed that domestic politics and international politics were closely related. This proved especially troublesome because Johnson would approach international issues in the mistaken belief that they were divisible as domestic decisions were divisible. Unfortunately, war and peace are not divisible issues. Fourth, Johnson's inexperience reinforced his desire to make the public and the Congress believe that the decisions on Vietnam were only incremental and not a shift in policy.

The Decision Making System.

The problems created by inexperience were reinforced by his decision making system. Johnson pursued an incremental or gradual approach to the Vietnam policy in an attempt to avoid any one decision appearing as a change in the policy and thus create a problem for his domestic program. Johnson wanted to stress continuity in Vietnam Moreover, Johnson wanted to see the decisions as reversible and smaller changes appear to be more easily reversed than larger ones. The incremental decisions were justified as continuing a policy rather than a change in policy. This incremental strategy robbed Johnson of his flexibility because it reinforced his reliance on first principles. In domestic politics Johnson trusted his political instincts so he could take, as a southerner, the innovative steps on Civil Rights. Johnson, as president, and was not bound, as a southern, to an outworn principle in the way that Johnson's mentor, the famous Georgian Senator,

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[214] See Conkin, Big Daddy, p. 192.
[215] Kearns, American Dream, p.216.
[216] See Larry Berman, Planning a Tragedy on these four fateful weeks.

Richard Russell was.[217] However, in Vietnam, Johnson was bound to his first principles in a way that Russell was bound to his first principles in domestic policy. This resulted in inflexibility because he could not escape his own first principles that he relied upon to back up his judgement.

The first principles, or underlying assumptions for containment and the United States' intervention in South Vietnam, were always well supported in the debates leading up to 28 July 1965. For example, in the July meetings, and before, the Munich analogy was invoked to justify increased involvement in South Vietnam.[218] Johnson's main foreign policy advisor, Rusk, reasoned from these first principles and structured his arguments on them. Such principles do not allow for marginal adjustments, but they do suggest a built in solution. Rusk's principles were derived from his belief in the UN world order and the United States' mission to uphold that order. North Vietnam had to leave its neighbour alone and the principle suggested a formal procedure to solve the problem: the United States must fight, without widening or escalating the war, until North Vietnam complied. In that regard, the advice presupposed an inherent middle path. The United States would not leave and it would not widen the war. It would hold on in South Vietnam until the situation improved.[219]

The middle path or muddling through.

To understand Johnson's decision making system, the thesis relies upon a decision making theory that closely resembles it. The system that emphasised finding a middle path between competing policy choices can be described as "muddling through."[220] The phrase is taken from Charles Lindblom's 1959 article "The Science of "Muddling Through"". In that work, Lindblom suggested that decision makers follow one of two models. The ideal is the "comprehensive" model, but that is difficult to achieve because it requires a tremendous amount of information. It also requires a prior agreement on fundamental principles but agreement on these principles from the start is often hard to achieve.[221] The alternative is the "limited comparison" model.. By

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[217] See T. Harry Williams, "Huey Lyndon and Southern Radicalism," The Journal of American History 60, no. 2 (September, 1973): 267-293.
[218] See Khong Yuen Foong, Analogies at war Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam decisions of 1965 (Princeton ,New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992).
[219] See FRUS January February 1964-1968 Vol. II Vietnam January-June 1965 pp. 95-97.
[220] The term comes from an article by Charles Lindblom "The Science of Muddling Through" Public Administration Review 19 (1959): 79-88.
[221] Ibid., pp. 81-82.

focusing on the limited alternatives that offer marginal improvements, the model simplifies the decision process. The search for marginal improvements assumes an agreement on the underlying principles. One can reconcile competing positions by focusing on marginal improvements that they share. The debate is about the best alternative rather than an attempt to think through each policy from its first principles. The model, as it reflected Johnson's decision making style, had a major drawback in that a test of a good policy was the extent to which analysts agreed.

A second problem was that the policy makers often came to an issue shaped by previous policy choices that led up to the current decision. The decision maker would have access to the information, reasons and justifications, that support a policy that would not always be available to outsiders. The access to information would encourage acceptance of the status quo rather than a rethinking of the issue. The decisions leading up to July 1965 often reflected the limited comparison model. The following, written in 1959, could easily describe Lyndon Johnson's decision making style in 1965.

> The trouble lies in the fact that most of us approach policy problems within a framework given by our view of a chain of successive policy choices made up to the present..... An administrator enjoys an intimate knowledge of his past sequences that "outsiders" do not share and his thinking and that of the "outsiders" will consequently be different in ways that may puzzle both.[222]

In other words, the limited comparison model, unlike the "comprehensive" model, does not start from "first principles", but starts from the status quo because the fundamental principles are already provided. As pointed out above, Rusk helped to provide and reinforce those first principles.[223]

Rusk's policy advice was often based on the first principles of the United States commitments. In a very direct manner, the whole momentum of the decisions made in July 1965 reflected the strength and continuity of the status quo. To critics, or those suggesting alternatives, the task would be to show that the previous decisions were wrong or had failed *and* that future decisions would lead to further problems. The major problem for those, like George Ball, suggesting an alternative was that they were hard pressed to demonstrate, conclusively, that the

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[222] Ibid., p. 88.
[223] Ibid., p.84.

current policies, circa 1965, had failed. In 1968, such evidence existed, but it did not exist in 1965 when the decisions were being made.

The decision makers were captive to the continuity that led up to the decision and lacked the freedom to find an alternative that challenged fundamental alternatives. For example, George Ball's alternative policies required a rethink of fundamental principles, but the other policy choices already carried the weight of precedent and were therefore more persuasive. The persuasive power was enhanced because Johnson, as president, wanted to reinforce the image of continuity and sought to avoid any decisions that gave the appearance of a radical change in policy.

A further problem was that in many cases, the decision makers in 1965 were more aware of what they wanted to avoid rather than what they wanted to achieve. Lindblom, in A Strategy of Decision, written in 1963 suggested that policy makers follow an incremental approach to decisions. That approach allows them to pursue a policy based on what they wanted to avoid rather than what they wanted to achieve.[224] The approach avoided debate over issues of fundamental difference and emphasises issues and decisions where agreement already existed. Incrementalism relied upon the ability to find marginal or incremental changes between policies and would avoid alternatives that suggested a larger change. Agreement over immediate and pressing problems becomes detached from longer term goals that may contain disagreement.[225] Policy advisers and Lyndon Johnson could see short term and immediate solutions to their political problem, but they rarely engaged in long term planning. They were unwilling to undertake the difficult task of reassessing their fundamental commitment and solving the long term problem. In another fashion, the success of a middle path may only paper over the fundamental disagreements that would crop up later.

Second, Johnson's success in domestic politics created an overconfidence in his political skills. As mentioned above, Johnson succeeded in domestic politics by finding a successful middle path between conflicting policy alternatives. In this manner, Johnson often relied upon his ability to find a minimal consensus between policy alternatives, but the technique was not always successful in foreign policy decisions. The search for a middle path had two

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[224] David Braybrooke and Charles E Lindblom, A Strategy of Decision (New York: The Free Press, 1963), p.74.
[225] Ibid., p. 134.

important consequences. First, he often employed the technique of "political judo". With this technique, Johnson would use an opponent's position, to his own advantage, to gain a short term advantage. He developed that technique in the domestic arena, but it did not have practical application in the international arena where leaders did not need Johnson. The second consequence was that events in the international arena are not often susceptible to domestic skills because they are not divisible.

Pride and Ambition.

Lyndon Johnson was a man of great ambition and pride. He not only wanted to be president, but he wanted to be the greatest president ever. His desire for greatness drove Johnson to attempt to surpass Franklin Roosevelt. Johnson had seen what Roosevelt had accomplished as president and he wanted to lead the United States and help it to fulfil its potential for greatness. For example, Johnson not only wanted to create a Great Society within the United States, but he believed that it could be brought to the world. He envisioned a great world society.

Pride and ambition influenced Johnson's decision regarding the Vietnam war in several ways. Johnson identified his personal success with the success of his policies in Vietnam. At one level, this can be a successful strategy for keeping focus on a policy. On another level, this can encourage inflexibility and stubbornness because of the real or apparent costs of changing policy. Of course, Johnson also understood that success, even at the cost of his pride, was better than failure, but the pride and ambition can also inhibit policy choices. However, Johnson also had great pride in his ability to overcome political problems. His political skills were legendary and his success had been built upon his ability to apply these skills in overcoming difficult problems.

Johnson attempted to meet the equally ambitious goals of war and reforms. When faced with the choice between war and reforms, though, Johnson failed to choose. He would not accept that the war might require him to scale down his reforms. To the extent that most of the legislation for the Great Society was passed before the Vietnam War became a major issue, he was correct. However, he paid a price for downplaying the cost of the war and the extent of the effort required. In that regard his decision was a failure. None of this is to suggest that a less ambition man would have made different decisions. It is to suggest that Johnson's ambition would not let him scale down his goals to a more moderate and manageable level. To be fair, Johnson was aware that the

opportunity to pass the Great Society legislation would not wait for him. He could not wait until the war ended and he had to take his opportunities when they occurred.

As a very proud man, Johnson did not like being dependent on anyone, least of all experts or advisers. He often felt intimidated by experts and he wanted to control his advisors as extensions of his person.[226] To make them "his" advisers or "his" experts, he would often try to "break" them or make them dependent upon his authority and good graces.[227] In this manner, he would keep control rather than be at the mercy of someone else. Johnson's pride influenced how he managed his **advisers** and the advice he received. He had to rely heavily upon experts or advisers and could not rely upon his political skills. Such dependence was anathema to his pride. Johnson had to depend on his advisers in a way that Kennedy, who believed in his experience in foreign policy, did not. This is not to say that Johnson was a captive of his advisers, or that he was misinformed. On the contrary, he could still use his political insights to analyse the policy advice. As a political analyst he demonstrated an amazing grasp of details when he focused on a problem. The problem, as mentioned above, was that he lacked a feel for the nuance, the mastery over foreign politics that he possessed for domestic politics. The inexperience influenced his foreign policy decision making style because it led him to follow the foreign policy hierarchy for advice. Johnson relied upon his foreign policy hierarchy to a greater degree than Kennedy.

Johnson relied on the foreign policy hierarchy more than Kennedy. Kennedy came to office want tot be his own Secretary of State and felt confident in his foreign policy skills. He was comfortable with the ambiguity and nuance of foreign policy. Johnson, by contrast, did not want to be his own Secretary of State. He was not as confident as Kennedy of his skills in foreign policy. To compensate for his inexperience and uncertainty, he relied upon the formal foreign policy hierarchy. A related reason for relying on the hierarchy was that it gave Johnson greater control over foreign policy because he could limit the advisers involved. An example of this was the Tuesday Lunch meetings. As Johnson pointed out, no one ever leaked the discussions in the

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[226] See Kearns, American Dream, p. 238.
[227] Kearns, American Dream, p. 238. Kearns touches upon Johnson desire to make his advisers loyal to him and his interests. Johnson was always worried if an adviser was thinking more of his own interest rather than the President's interest. For a similar concern, see Xenophon, The Education of Cyrus, trans. H.G. Dakyns (Everyman's Library ed. Ernest Rhys) (London: J.M.Dent and Sons, 1914) Book 7 Chapter 5 Sentences 59-62.

Tuesday Lunches.[228] When Johnson relied upon a small group for decisions, like the Tuesday Lunch group, it emphasised the cabinet secretaries. The small group reinforced and magnified Rusk's influence. When Kennedy came to office intending to be his own Secretary of State, many critics thought Rusk's position would be marginal. After the early crises, especially the Bay of Pigs fiasco, Kennedy came to value Rusk's advice.[229] Unlike with Kennedy, Rusk did not have to earn Johnson's respect. Johnson as a Southerner felt a certain kinship with Rusk and he saw him as a fellow outcast from a Kennedy administration dominated by the Eastern Establishment. The cultural and organisational circumstances increased Rusk's influence on Johnson. The influence was also increased by a decision making system that relied upon the precedents rather than seeking to reassess fundamental principles.

Domestic political skills.

In contrast to foreign policy, Johnson was more successful in domestic politics with "muddling through". In this arena, he could trust his own political instincts. This gave him flexibility which was not present in his foreign policy. The decision making theory and the contrast between Johnson's successes and failures in foreign and domestic politics helps us to understand his strengths and weaknesses as a decision maker. The weaknesses become apparent in foreign policy because of Johnson's inexperience but also the different nature of international politics. In domestic politics, the same decision style was a strength because of Johnson's experience, his feel for the nuances, and the different nature of domestic politics. As a domestic politician Johnson was able to find a common ground or a consensus with policy opponents because domestic politicians share an underlying agreement, they accept the rules of the game.

Johnson always tried to avoid extreme political positions and consciously sought to find a middle ground that could incorporate both sides without giving up too much to either side. Johnson knew that a policy is always being remade because the problem is never solved, it is only alleviated. Thus, there is a constant need to return repeatedly to agreements and work from the existing policy precedents. Johnson was a master of incremental politics within the domestic

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[228] See David C. Humphrey "Tuesday Lunch at the Johnson White House" Diplomatic History (Winter 1984): 81-101. In particular Johnson liked the meetings because they never produced a leak. p. 93. See also David M. Barrett "Doing Tuesday Lunch at Lyndon Johnson's White House New Archival Evidence" PS: Political Science and Politics 24, no. 4 (1991): 676-679.
[229] See Wicker, JFK and LBJ, pp. 197-199.

setting because of his strengths. He was pragmatic, had a commanding knowledge of the extremes, and understood what motivated the other policy makers. He could employ his intimate knowledge of the Senate to his advantage. All of these were advantages to him in the domestic realm where he developed his political skills.

Johnson wanted to make his mark with the Great Society, not with foreign policy. In the Great Society, Johnson's ambition matched his political skills. He would use his opportunity and his skills to bring the various domestic programs that made up the Great Society package to the United States. He brought to that task tremendous political skills. As the Senate Majority Leader, Johnson had a well-earned reputation as a persuader. He had honed his innate political skills with over thirty years of political experience. The central skill that Johnson possessed was his ability to find common ground with his political opponents and avoid the extreme polarising position in any decision. Johnson often employed the technique as a form of "political judo" wherein he used his opponent's initiative to his own advantage.[230] He used this manoeuvre to mollify the military without alarming those who criticised the intervention.[231]

Johnson succeeded because he was a cautious politician who made sure that he had the situation in hand before he committed himself. This would allow him to control the situation and avoid being manipulated by other actors. As Philip Geyelin suggested, one of Johnson's laws was: "The prime time for decision making is when everybody else has show his hand."[232] Yet, for all his caution and desire to find a middle path, Johnson took enormous political risks and often took the lead on issues, like the civil rights legislation. However, he took these risks and took the lead on the political issues because he trusted his political instincts. His sense of timing and feel for the political moment told him that it was time to take the lead. Johnson's belief in his own political instincts was an important political character trait. As Joseph Califano and Doris Kearns point out, Johnson trusted his own political judgement on domestic issues to the extent that he often overruled his domestic political advisers.[233] Johnson understood that the President must often take

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[230] Geyelin, Lyndon B. Johnson, p.11.
[231] See for example, George C. Herring, LBJ and Vietnam: A different kind of war (Austin: University of Texas, 1995), pp. 25-62.
[232] Geyelin, Lyndon B. Johnson, p.154.
[233] See Califano, Triumph and Tragedy; Kearns, American Dream, p. 256.

the lead to guide the nation, but he took the lead because his thirty-four years of political experience told him to take the lead.

As a domestic politician, and as a President proposing massive social reforms, Johnson was not simply a political magician able to mysteriously persuade people to follow his policies. He was able to persuade the people largely because, as Kearns points out, he was in harmony with the domestic electorate. In divining the national will, Johnson was also aware that the consensus could and would quickly dissipate. The Great Society legislation was successful in large part because he had accurately anticipated the national will.

> As the full scope of Johnson's ambitions gradually became apparent, public reaction seemed to demonstrate that he had accurately perceived the national will... His landslide election in 1964 appeared to constitute popular approval and a mandate to proceed.... During 1964 and 1965, however, Johnson's virtuoso performance obscured the fact that all his achievements depended upon the essential harmony between his acts and popular desires; that without that all his skills and energies would have been futile.....[234]

Johnson's success in carrying out the Great Society legislation vindicated his political instincts. While his political instincts for domestic politics helped Johnson to achieve success, he did not possess the same instincts for foreign policy. His instincts were blunted by his inexperience.

The problems with international politics, foreign policy inexperience, and domestic politics, overconfidence in political skills, contributed to the third reason for Johnson's failed middle path. **Third, Johnson believed that his foreign and domestic policies were connected.** Johnson failed to balance the two areas and connected them in the belief that he could not avoid them.[235] Combining the two realms had consequences. The first was that he failed to distinguish fully between domestic and international politics. Johnson did not fully understand that the two realms moved at their own pace and by their own logic. For example, the domestic arena has divisible issues (A housing policy is divisible). Foreign affairs do not always have divisible issues. (Sovereignty is not divisible.) The search for a middle path mixed the two realms and placed them on diverging paths. The second consequence was that Lyndon Johnson connected foreign and domestic policy because he believed be could obtain the results in both. Johnson forced himself into a corner where he had to convince the public and Congress that the question was no longer

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[234] Kearns, American Dream, p.212.
[235] See Johnson, Vantage Point, p.443. Johnson says the two streams of American life came together at that moment and he had to follow them wherever they led.

either/or but one where the United States could have and afford both policies.[236] As Johnson understood the situation, the only solution for overcoming the opposition of the "Hawks" who wanted war but not reforms and the "Doves" who wanted reforms but not the war was to try to give both what they wanted. In this regard, Johnson set off to balance two diverging policy lines, on the minimum consensus between them, but failed to see that one policy turned inward while the other pushed outward. The final effect was to create an imbalance in policy and within the American regime that is the subject for section two.

Johnson believed that his foreign and domestic policies were connected.[237] This reflected, in part, a failure to distinguish fully between domestic and international politics. In contrast to the inflexibility created by rules or principles, Johnson, in **domestic politics,** often relied on an incremental approach to maintain **flexibility** in finding a middle path between extreme positions. However, in foreign policy Johnson's inexperience made him rely upon rules that reduced his flexibility. Johnson combined the incremental approach with the tendency to see foreign policy issues like domestic issues. As many writers have pointed out; Johnson sought a middle path on issues.[238] In Vietnam, Johnson undertook a flawed middle path, an undeclared ground war, between the extremes of escalation and withdrawal. At the same time, he tried to chart out a middle path between war and reforms. Johnson believed that he had to take the unpopular middle path between war abroad and reform at home if he was to keep his promises.[239] The argument here is that Johnson chose a flawed middle path because he believed that he could have both. His choice was as ambitious as it was imprudent. The immoderate behaviour was a central reason for Johnson's failure as a foreign policy prince. Johnson, in other words, lacked the necessary self-restraint, the necessary virtue to succeed.. As Leo Strauss, commenting on Machiavelli's teachings, explained, a successful prince must possess true virtue. ""True Virtue", "the true way," consists not in the extirpation of ambition but in ambition guided by prudence."[240] Johnson's ambitious dreams for the United States were not tempered by an awareness of the limits

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[236] See McGeorge Bundy, The End of Either/Or," Foreign Affairs (January 1967): 159-201.
[237] Johnson, Vantage Point, p. 443.
[238] Roland Evans and Robert Novak, Lyndon B. Johnson: The Exercise of Power: A political biography (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1967), p. 550. Geyelin, Lyndon B. Johnson , p. 187.
[239]Johnson, The Vantage Point, p. 443.
[240]Leo Strauss, Thoughts on Machiavelli (Glencoe Illinois: The Free Press: 1958), p.264.

of power to change and to control change in the United States or in the world. Johnson's middle path was flawed because he overestimated the United States' patience and underestimated North Vietnam's perseverance.

Johnson chose the wrong middle path because he had lost the political flexibility to deal with the issue. He accepted the United States' responsibility for the war and the continuing survival of South Vietnam and therefore he believed that the United States' commitment was fixed. There were several reasons for this belief. First, Johnson wanted to maintain continuity with what he perceived as Kennedy's program. Second, he believed that America's complicity in Diem's death made America responsible. Third, he believed that the United States' commitment to the continued existence of South Vietnam had been established since the Geneva Accords of 1954 and the SEATO treaty of 1955.[241] Fourth, Johnson's personalised the issue by staking his pride and reputation on South Vietnam's continued existence. "I [Johnson] was not about to see Vietnam go the way of China." These reasons contributed to reducing Johnson's flexibility on the issue. Moreover, Johnson made it an issue of domestic politics. Unlike the previous presidents, notably Kennedy, Johnson did not keep South Vietnam at an arm's length by dealing with it as a foreign policy issue. Johnson, by contrast, saw Vietnam as a continuation of his domestic policies.[242] As noted above, Johnson failed to see the difference between domestic and international politics. By making it a domestic political issue and seeing it in that way, he tied it up with his Great Society program. He saw them as two sides of the same coin. Johnson failed to keep the two separate and, in that regard, he believed that he had to accept the middle path between them.

Could Johnson have avoided the irreconcilable dilemma between war and reforms if he had chosen wisely? Any answer is speculative at best, but we can suggest a possible answer by understanding how Johnson's approach differed from Kennedy's. Tom Wicker observed that the

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[241] See for example Fred I. Greenstein, Richard H. Immerman, "What Did Eisenhower Tell Kennedy about Indochina? The Politics of Misperception," The Journal of American History 79, no. 2. (September 1992): 568-587. See especially p. 568.

[242] Gardner, Pay Any Price, p. 156. There he discusses a memo that Douglas Cater submitted which informed much of the 1965 state of the union address. It said that there is no longer a dividing line between foreign and domestic. The die is being cast. The memo also reflects Johnson's belief that there is no difference between the two realms. It also reflects Johnson's political training within domestic politics. See Denise M. Bostdorff and Steven R. Goldzwig "Idealism and Pragmatism in American Foreign Policy Rhetoric: The Case of John F. Kennedy and Vietnam," Presidential Studies Quarterly 24, no. 3 (Summer 1994): 515-530.

two presidents probably would have made different choices on 24 November 1963, because of their personalities, the context for the decisions, and their respective approaches to the problem.[243] What is immediately apparent is how Johnson made Vietnam a domestic issue in that he did not treat it at arm's length, as a foreign policy issue. Kennedy kept the question of Vietnam at a distance by keeping his full intentions ambiguous.[244] This is not to suggest whether he would have withdrawn or escalated, only to suggest that unlike Johnson, Kennedy kept his position ambiguous. Kenneth Thompson argues that Kennedy seemed unable to reconcile the activist and the pragmatic elements in his foreign policy. However, it appears that Kennedy sought to balance the two extremes, thereby following Machiavelli's counsel to alternate, follow a middle path, between contrasting qualities as necessity dictated.[245]

Johnson, by contrast, immediately eschewed the ambiguity and accepted the commitment as fixed. This reduced his political flexibility. He compounded that problem by identifying Vietnam with his Great Society. As Lloyd Gardner pointed out, Johnson claimed that he was bringing the Great Society to Vietnam because he believed his Great Society lived or died by Vietnam.[246] To fulfil that commitment, Johnson chose a flawed middle path between war and reforms by entering an undeclared war he knew that would generate opposition on political and economic grounds. Johnson believed he could straddle both war and reforms even though they were rapidly diverging economically and politically. The flawed middle path was the result of his flawed political character but he could have made a wiser choice if he had restrained his ambition.

A possible correct middle path between war and reforms is the following. As suggested in Chapter 15 of The Prince, Machiavelli argues, that a prince must be able to be not good or good

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[243] Wicker, Personality, p. 185. The book is devoted to exploring the influence of personality upon politics, but on p. 185 Wicker suggests that "Kennedy *could* have had an alternative, while Johnson had none whatever." [Emphasis in the original.]

[244] See Bostdorff and Steven R. Goldzwig "Idealism and Pragmatism." The article argues that Kennedy sought to balance idealistic arguments and pragmatic arguments in his foreign policy. The authors suggest that if Kennedy had lived he would have faced problems similar to those Johnson faced over Vietnam. While the authors do not attempt to connect the rhetoric to a policy strategy, the authors do suggest that Kennedy was walking a middle path as he tried to blend and balance idealistic and pragmatic arguments. On p. 525 the authors note the following "To comprehend the President's Vietnam rhetoric more fully, one has to understand both types of arguments and the way in which Kennedy intertwined them."

[245] Kenneth W. Thompson, Traditions and Values in Politics and Diplomacy: Theory and Practice (London: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), p. 269; Machiavelli, The Prince , Chapter 15. The importance of the middle path can be seen throughout Chapters 15-19.

[246] Gardner, Pay any Price, p. 98.

according to necessity. The prince, in other words, must find a middle path between always being contradictory qualities. In doing so, the prince often has to take an extreme position, but make it appear as a moderate middle path. In this case, the moderate or correct middle path may have been choosing one of the policy extremes. However, Lyndon Johnson appeared to lack the courage necessary to make the difficult but courageous decisions to make either of his goals succeed or to restrain himself and have the goals at a lower level. A correct middle path would have required Johnson to choose. A middle path cannot be maintained between two fundamentally opposed policies. On policy was pulling the nation outwards and the other was turning it inwards. The only hope for a successful middle path was in either of the two policies, not in trying to reconcile them. The only possibility of keeping both policies would be to attempt them both at a lower level. The obvious first assumption is that Johnson could have restrained his ambition to have both goals and settled for smaller reforms and a larger war or larger reforms and a smaller war. For example, he could have avoided a costly war if he had made explicit to the public that the United States was entering a dangerous and potentially open ended commitment. Johnson would have had smaller reforms and taken some criticism for the smaller effort in Vietnam. He could have muted that criticism by showing that a larger commitment would cost more and that it would reduce domestic programs. Johnson could have taken the courageous course and raised taxes to finance the war. In that manner Johnson could have avoided the appearance of duplicity, avoided the economic dislocations, and achieved viable reforms. While such a path may have been politically perilous, it was economically feasible.[247]

The argument is highly speculative and problematic given the political, social, economic, and geo-political milieu. Johnson could have achieve both goals if he had lessened his ambition and attempted smaller efforts or used his political skills to work through a tax increase. The first went against his political character and the latter against what he perceived as the political reality. Johnson, however, was also a very pragmatic and practical politician who, if he had faced the hard choice rather than hoping it would somehow improve over the long run, could have made a wiser

[247] See Otto Eckstein, "The economics of the 1960s--a backward look," The Public Interest no. 18 1970 p. 91. See also Otto Eckstein, The Great Recession: with a postscript on stagflation (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1978), pp. 33-36. See also Allen J. Matusow, The Unraveling of America: a history of Liberalism in the 1960s (New York: Harper and Row, 1984).

choice. Moreover, Johnson had fixed his position on 24 November 1963 and by accepting the continuing momentum in Vietnam, rather than trying to manipulate it, Johnson stepped onto the path towards escalation and intervention. If Johnson had maintained his flexibility and kept to a middle path in that moment, kept his commitment ambiguous rather than fixing them, he might have been able to avoid a large scale commitment. Such a choice may well have required a slow and gradual withdrawal from Vietnam. This choice is unlikely because it would have required him to choose a policy that ran counter to what he had done up to this point. Unlike Kennedy, Johnson did not choose to keep his foreign policy ambiguous. Johnson wanted to have his cake, avoid appearing to escalate, and eat it, send in more troops to "win". In this regard, he kept his policy execution ambiguous rather than his policy choices.

Johnson appeared to lack the courage needed to make the difficult decisions. For example, he delayed the tax cut decision, a decision that represented a choice between the war and reforms. Johnson lacked the necessary detachment in this situation. He often invoked his pride and personalised the issue, and this inhibited his ability to reassess whether the United States could sustain the ambitious economic and political goals he wanted to achieve. He lacked the understanding and courage of a statesman who, in a detached way, understand the limits of nation's power. Tragically, Johnson's political training was designed for the short term, making the deal, rather than developing a long term view of how the decisions interconnected. Johnson had ideals, but he lacked the necessary vision to connect his short term policies to the achievement of those overarching ideals. He lacked the statesman's vision. The flawed middle path was pursued because his ambition would not allow him to take lesser or alternative positions. If Johnson had chosen either extreme or chosen a better middle path, he could have salvaged more than he had lost. This may have be asking too much of Johnson and the United States in the 1960s, but he failed to assess the decision's larger political and economic ramifications because of his inexperience in these areas. Johnson's inexperience deprived him of the necessary understanding of the military requirements and uncertainties involved with fighting in Vietnam. In economics, the same inexperience compounded the military decisions. Johnson failed to make the crucial economic decision, a tax increase in December 1965, because his economic inexperience and his ambitions for the Great Society kept him from acting until forced to by necessity.

Johnson wanted to be remembered for having tried.[248] It would have been better to have understood that pragmatism is trying to achieve the desirable considering the possible.[249] His ambitious goals could not be met because he lacked the courage to make the difficult, but necessary, choices. Johnson wanted to avoid the extreme decisions, either withdraw or escalate to win because his personality and his political training led him to find a minimal consensus.[250] In Vietnam, Johnson avoided or attempted to avoid the hard choice between war and reforms until forced to by necessity.[251] Johnson wanted to avoid a hard choice because he wanted to find a way that would allow him to have both goals without compromising either one. In this regard, he was able to balance the competing claims, but only for so long. Johnson only delayed the necessary choice created by his ambition. The flawed choice to pursue both goals created an imbalance in the American regime that brought it to the brink of a Machiavellian Moment.

Section Two. The Machiavellian Moment: A dangerous imbalance.

On 28 July 1965, Lyndon Johnson faced an issue that could not be overcome by the "treatment" or by any of the political tricks that he had learned. He confronted the difficult question of how to balance an undeclared war with massive domestic reforms. Johnson submitted massive domestic reforms that would transform the political, social, and economic and bring America's promise to all citizens, while simultaneously taking steps to fulfil America's promise overseas. He believed that his domestic programs were connected to his foreign policy in Vietnam. He thought he could avoid the difficult choice between the war in Vietnam or the Great Society at home. He believed that the United States could grow fast enough economically and politically to afford both policies and thereby keep them in balance. However, events in Vietnam forced his hand and the cost of the war both political and economically undermined both his domestic and his foreign policies.

In 1965, the military situation in Vietnam deteriorated and the United States intervened to keep South Vietnam from being defeated. If South Vietnam were defeated, Lyndon Johnson

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[248]Johnson, <u>Vantage Point</u>, p.569 and Dallek, <u>Flawed Giant</u>, p. 598.
[249] Thompson, <u>Traditions and Values</u>, p. 263.
[250] See Geyelin, <u>Lyndon B. Johnson</u>, p. 33.
[251] See Machiavelli, <u>Prince</u>, Ch. 25.

believed that he would suffer a political backlash similar to or greater than the one that followed the "loss" of China.[252] If that occurred, it would destroy his Great Society legislative program. Yet, he realised that if he became fully involved in South Vietnam, the war would divert resources and attention from his domestic programs. Johnson did not want to choose between the two goals. Instead, as had been the practice throughout his political career, he tried to reconcile the two conflicting and incompatible extremes by choosing a middle path between them. The path Johnson chose was flawed, because it created a dangerous imbalance within the American regime.

Johnson had built his political career upon the ability to find a middle path, the smallest workable consensus, between two alternative policy positions. Even though he tried to find a successful middle path, the ambitious policies of the war in Vietnam and the Great Society, were irreconcilable. No middle path existed that would allow him to keep both intact at the levels he desired. Johnson pursued two middle paths at the same time. At one level, Johnson pursued a middle path between reforms and war. On a second level, Johnson pursued a middle path in the Vietnam policy between escalation and withdrawal. Moreover, Johnson's ambition would not allow him to accept that he had to sacrifice either goal if he was to achieve one or the other. Johnson believed that America could have both and that he could deliver both goals.[253] Johnson recalled the decision in his memoirs. "I was convinced that the middle ground was the right course for the United States. That was the fundamental approach of my administration, and I was not going to abandon it."[254]

The decision marks the beginning of Johnson's doomed balancing act. He wanted to maintain the limited and balanced domestic structure even as he was pursuing an imbalanced foreign policy that pursued universalistic principles. The decision created an imbalance within the regime between the domestic political principles and the principles the United States was attempting to promote and defend overseas. He thought he could have both because he was trying to expand the Republic politically. The civil rights reforms extended the Republic domestically and the events in Vietnam were justified in large part on the basis that the United States was

[252] See Brian VanDeMark, Into the Quagmire: Lyndon Johnson and the Escalation of the Vietnam War (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 216.
[253] See Johnson's 1966 inaugural address in Lyndon Baines Johnson, Public Papers of the President of the United States (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967), p. 3.
[254] Johnson, Vantage Point, p. 443.

defending the same principles in Vietnam. The danger from this view was that it appeared that the United States appeared to be trying to translate its domestic political structure into a world order. The imbalance between reforms and an undeclared war, as well as the United States' political regime and its international role brought the United States to the brink of a Machiavellian Moment.

The 28 July 1965 decision created a crisis within the American regime. The crisis developed from a foreign policy commitment, but it went to the heart of the republic. The undeclared war in South Vietnam, was an attempt to defend universal principles that the United States promoted at home. To fight the war successfully and uphold the world order required an unlimited commitment, but the success of those principles at home had been based on a limited and balanced government. The United States' involvement in the Vietnam war altered the limited and balanced government. At home, Johnson expanded the government dramatically through the Great Society legislation. Abroad, Johnson undertook an undeclared war to fulfil the universal principles of collective security and the Truman Doctrine. Both policies, domestic and foreign policy, relied upon the strong executive. What is of interest here is how Johnson justified the undeclared war on the basis of the president's prerogative in foreign policy. This altered the balance of power between the executive and legislative branches.

The simultaneous programs of reforms and an undeclared war expanded the power of the government and threatened the idea of a limited government at home. The prerogative that the president exercised in foreign affairs had an influence on the domestic arena. In order to fulfil the commitment to the world order, the United States appeared to face the choice between a limited government, a republic, and an unlimited government, an empire. Increased presidential power threatened to disrupt the balanced government.[255] The threat to a balanced government by an executive centralising power is one sign of empire according to Pocock.[256] Johnson tried to avoid the crisis by waging a limited war, but that only addressed the symptoms rather than solving the problem. The crisis was exacerbated by the simultaneous push for domestic reforms. The limited and balanced domestic regime, already in flux from reforms, was being unbalanced by the foreign policy commitment to defend the world order. The underlying problem was that the United States

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[255] See J.G.A. Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine political thought and the Atlantic republican tradition. (Princeton (N.J.): Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 361-374.
[256] Ibid., p. 391 and p. 510.

could not expand fast enough to keep both demands in balance. In particular, the emphasis on a limited government at home created, in part, a restraint on the expanded government that Johnson created.

The section makes three interconnected claims about the imbalances that brought the United States to a near Machiavellian Moment. **First, the United States' society was torn between the war, which focused the country outward, and reforms which focused the country inward.** The evidence for this claim can be seen in the economic dislocations created by the guns and butter policies, the anti-war protests that developed as the United States' military involvement increased, the increased opposition to the war by Congress as demonstrated in the tax policies of late 1968.[257] **The second claim is that the United States government level, the normally balanced government was threatened by the increased power of the executive branch at the expense of the legislative branch.** The evidence for this can be seen in the increased powers of the e central government during this time and the increased power of the executive branch. During this time the central government increased its involvement in many areas of public life through the Great Society legislation. For example, in economic policy, Keynesian theory required the government to managing the economy.[258] The executive branch also increased its power at the expense of the legislative branch. The executive branch increased its power by relying on the president's prerogative in foreign policy and the domestic reforms.[259] As Pocock warned, a powerful executive threatens the unbalance the balanced government necessary to sustain a republic. As the example of ancient Rome suggests, the Senate was in danger of being eclipsed by one man: Lyndon Johnson. While it may be an overstatement to say that Johnson was dominating the Senate in the way that Augustus dominated the Roman Senate, it is true that Johnson had a tremendous influence over the Senate. More to the point, Johnson was expanding

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[257] An example of this can be seen in how Wilbur Mills, Senate Ways and Means Committee Chairman, restrained the Federal Government's ability to finance the war and domestic reforms. This had the effect of changing Johnson's domestic strategy from expanding the Great Society to preserving it. See Robert M. Collins, "The Economic Crisis of 1968 and the Waning of the 'American Century'" American Historical Review 101 (April 1996): 412- 422.

[258] See David Fand, "Keynesian Monetary Theories, Stabilizations Policy, and the Recent Inflation." Journal of Money, Credit and Banking. 1, no. 3 (Conference of University Professors) (August, 1969): 558.

[259] The work of Gordon Silverstein, Arthur Schlesinger, Jacob Javits focus on the constitutional implications of the increased presidential power created in part by its responsibility as Commander in Chief.

the central governments role in all facets of American society and at the centre of this was the Executive. One can see reactions to these developments in the economic and the political spheres. In the economic sphere, the inflation created by the misapplied Keynesian theory, discredited the belief that the government could and should fine-tune the economy. In the political front, Congress reacted to the imbalance in the short term and the long term. In the short term, the Congress reacted to the expanding government with strong demands for a tax increase. In the long term, they reasserted the balance by enacting, in an attempt to curb the president's power and reassert its own authority, the War Powers Act.

The first and second claims combine to support the third claim. The imbalance in the society, the competing claims of war and reforms, and the imbalances within the government, the imbalance between the executive and the legislative branches, combine to create a philosophical challenge. **The third claim is that the United States had committed itself to defend a world order and the result was that it faced, if it was to succeed in its external commitment to world order, the philosophical question: Republic or Empire?** The evidence for this claim can be seen in two ways. First, if the United States was to become an empire, it would require a change in its domestic structure. It would have to begin to move away from the balanced and limited government of a Republic, to a centralised and unlimited Imperial government. The intimations of this change and the potential antecedents can be seen in the effects of the imbalances identified in the first two claims. Second, if the United States was to undertake an Imperial role, it would shift its focus from its internal reforms, the bounded constitutional sphere, to the unbounded sphere of international relations. In other words, the United States would stop domestic reforms and focus on its external commitment to universal principles.

In the end, the United States pulled back from the brink of empire because its power was limited constitutionally to fulfil the external and internal goals created by Lyndon Johnson. The United States could not overcome the Soviet Union and the PRC in Vietnam and still remain a republic. To unleash the unlimited power of the United States economy and military would have required a full commitment to the external goals. This would have come at the price of the domestic reforms and a balanced and limited government at home.

First claim: the imbalance between the war and domestic reforms created a crisis within American society. The war and reforms were diverging policies that pulled American society in two different directions. The war pulled the Americans outward while reforms focused their attention inward. Johnson tried to find a middle path that would balance the two policies and allow him to sustain both, but he failed. The first cut at this problem is the economic consequences of attempting war and reforms simultaneously. The domestic economy was strained by the attempt to have war and reforms. The domestic problems, mainly inflation created by the defence spending. However, this also had an effect on the international monetary system. Under the Bretton Woods system, the United States dollar was a reserve currency. As such, domestic inflation could be "exported" abroad because the United States did not have to adjust its currency because it was the benchmark. Until 1966 that system worked because the United States kept its inflation low. However, the defence build up and flawed fiscal policy decisions created a high level of inflation. Other states began to complain when the inflation extended to the international system. The resulting balance of payments' problem strained the United States' ability to finance war and reforms. In sum, the United States could not finance the war and domestic reforms at the same time without creating economic dislocations both domestically and internationally.

A second cut at the problem reveals a deeper conflict between reforms and the war. With the Great Society legislation, Johnson was expanding the American promise to all Americans. At the same time he was expanding that same promise abroad through the Truman Doctrine and the United States' commitment to the UN charter. The Great Society reforms relied upon the expanded power of the government to help the average citizen and improve the general welfare. The domestic reforms were deepening the federal government's involvement in the daily life of most citizens. In Vietnam, the United States was expanding and defending universal principles similar to those found within its domestic system. The United States was attempting to defend the same freedom abroad that it was defending at home.[260] The foreign policy of upholding a world order required expanded powers for the federal government. Reforms required the federal government deepen its involvement in the domestic sphere while the war required the government to focus its attention abroad on the world order. The government and the country were being

[260]See Gardner, Pay any Price, p.97 and p. 256.

pulled in two opposite directions at the same time. The catalyst for that dilemma was the 28 July 1965 decision.

On 28 July 1965, Lyndon Johnson decided that the United States' security required that it increase its military involvement in South Vietnam. The decision identified the United States security with the security of the world order. While Johnson believed that the decision was correct, he had taken the fateful and imprudent step of attempting to sustain the war and reforms simultaneously. By pursuing both demanding goals, Johnson failed to temper his ambition with prudence.[261]

Prudence, in fulfilling a moral duty, requires judgement. Hadley Arkes, in discussing the morality of the United States' intervention in Vietnam, makes the following observation regarding the argument that the intervention was imprudent.

> Arguments drawn from prudence must of course hold a necessary place in moral judgement. It could not be irrelevant to know that the pursuit of our ends in any particular case might be self-defeating or that it might impair our capacity, in the long run, to achieve our decent ends. With that kind of sobriety Lincoln understood that the United States did not have the means, in the middle of the nineteenth century, to eradicate slavery wherever it existed abroad, and that any effort on the part of the United States to undertake this mission could lead to the destruction of the republican experiment in the United States.[262]

Arkes' point strikes home when we realise that neither Rusk nor Johnson wanted to wage World War Three to defend South Vietnam. By avoiding World War Three, they exercise a measure of prudence because they reconciled the means, limited war, to the goal, defending South Vietnam to deny North Vietnam victory. However, the charge of imprudence suggested here does not refer to the decision to fight or the decision to avoid World War Three. One should not invoke prudence, as Arkes points out, to shirk one's duty. The argument from prudence develops from how the event is justified according to the principle.

> What must be understood, then, is that prudence in its proper application, must proceed from a correct understanding of principle, and it must carry at all times the burden of justification.[263]

Johnson demonstrated imprudence by failing to realise that the principle at stake, the defence of South Vietnam, could not be done with half measures. This does not mean he should have waged a world war to defend South Vietnam. It means that he should not have undertaken a

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[261] See Strauss, Thoughts on Machiavelli, p. 261.
[262] Hadley Arkes, First Things: An Inquiry into the First Principles of Morals and Justice (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1986) p. 281.
[263] Ibid., p. 281.

limited war while pursuing domestic reforms. While it can be argued that *fortuna* does not always allow one to choose when or where to fight a war, it can also be argued that Johnson could control the pace of his domestic reforms and the war effort. Johnson was imprudent because he chose to fight an undeclared limited war which limited the resources and the attention he could focus on fulfilling the principle of defending South Vietnam's freedom. His imprudence stemmed from his inability to choose between reforms and war. Johnson's middle path was flawed because it failed at exactly the point where the president had to make a prudent decision. He chose not to choose and doomed both South Vietnam and his domestic reforms. He failed to understand that a middle path could not be achieved between the international and the domestic demands.

Johnson can be excused for his poor choice because he believed that the United States was rich enough and powerful enough to have both reforms at home and the war overseas.[264] Initially, such a view was credible but only because Johnson kept the cost of the war hidden from his economic and military advisers.[265] When it became apparent that the economy could not sustain the increased defence spending without economic dislocations, Johnson failed to act decisively on the necessary tax increase. He did not want the war, or the needed tax-increase, to imperil his domestic reforms.[266] That ambition combined with a lack of political courage led him to make two imprudent choices. The first was the decision to embark on an undeclared war. The second was the decision not to raise taxes to offset the war's impact on the economy. The initial

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[264] In his State of the Union address for 1966, Johnson said the United States was strong enough and rich enough to do both.

[265] Halberstam, Best and the Brightest, p. 736. Kettl attempts to downplay Johnson's apparent deceitfulness by stressing the political and economic problems that a tax increase faced. Matusow makes a similar argument, but the key problem remains that Johnson's advisers both military and political did not know the economic costs of the war. Much of the blame has fallen on McNamara, but it should rest with Johnson who was responsible for the final decisions. In a dissenting opinion, Deborah Shapley makes a strange argument to suggest that Johnson's failure to get the tax increase was a good thing in the long run because it kept America from waging a larger, expensive war, which she assumes would have been a wider war. See Deborah Shapley, The Promise and the Power: The life and times of Robert McNamara (Boston: Little Brown, 1993). While such analysis appears correct in the narrowest of senses, it ignores the massive economic problems created domestically and internationally by Johnson's decisions. Johnson's failure undercut the international monetary system and created a long term inflation. As Kettl argues, in the "Economic Education of Lyndon Johnson: Guns, Butter and Taxes," p. 54, the economic effects created by Johnson's economic policies in the 1960s did not wear off for fifteen years. Moreover, Johnson had no intention of widening the war for international political reasons as well as domestic political reasons. While economic problems may have been a concern, they were not paramount in determining his war strategy.

[266] See Johnson's State of the Union Address in 1966 as well as Johnson, Vantage Point, p. 443.

middle path of the undeclared war created a grave imbalance between the United States' domestic capabilities and its external commitments. Johnson's imprudence caused the United States to be over-stretched in Vietnam. However, in absolute terms it was not over-extended materially.[267] The war would not bankrupt the United States. However, the United States was over-extended in that it could not have both goals in the fullest extent desired. In this manner, the over-extension occurred philosophically because the ideas were demanding more than could be accomplished with material limits.[268]

Johnson's choices forced the United States to straddle on two rapidly diverging policies. The United States was undertaking domestic reforms and at the same time undertaking an undeclared war. In the words of J.G.A. Pocock, America was trying to stave off corruption (the domestic reforms) and simultaneously trying to defend the United States, and the world order, from the "stream of irrational events" abroad.[269] The Republic must constantly be balanced between threats from internal corruption and the threat of irrational events, like war, from abroad. In the

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[267] If Johnson had succeeded in getting a declaration of war, which he avoided, he could have placed the United States and its economy on a war footing. The possible resources at Johnson's disposal, if he went on war footing, could have enabled him to fight the war indefinitely. Whether Johnson could have or even wanted a declaration of war is another matter entirely. The point here is to suggest that the United States could afford the war *if* it undertook the necessary adjustments. For a further discussion of the gap between resources and commitments see Samuel Huntington. "Coping with the Lippmann Gap" Foreign Affairs 66, no. 2 (Winter, 1987-88): 453-477.

[268] Pocock, Machiavellian Moment, p. 543 makes the argument that the United States failed to expand the sphere of credit and virtue in Vietnam and that failure has doomed the United States to an Imperial Government. The point I am trying to make is that perhaps the United States' "failure" was not in that realm, but in the physical realm. Although Pocock is correct in that Johnson realised in 1968 that because of the economic cost of the Vietnam War he could no longer expand the Great Society and had to maintain it. The "failure" in South Vietnam was that it was conquered and a weak, young, constitutional state was destroyed, but it did not spell the end of the United States. In one sense the United States' "expansion" was ended because it lost an important ally on the Eurasian landmass. However, America continues to expand, albeit philosophically, by promoting the ideas of democracy and equality, as well as acting as an example for other non-democratic states. In that regard, Vietnam was not a Machiavellian Moment but a *near* Machiavellian Moment. If the UN system, which is perhaps **the** example of the United States' ambition, fails because the United States becomes corrupt, defeated, or fights a world destroying war then the Machiavellian Moment would have arrived. In other words, the United States has never attempted a Pax Americana because it has replaced its ambitions for a world order with a UN world order. In Vietnam, it inverted that relationship, experienced its failure, and has, ever since, been careful in undertaking large-scale foreign-policy interventions that are driven by liberal internationalist views.

[269] Pocock, Machiavellian Moment, p. vii. On the meaning of political corruption see J. Patrick Dobel, "The Corruption of a State," American Political Science Review 72, no. 3. (September, 1978): 958-973. See also Christopher Nadon, "From Republic to Empire: Political Revolution and the Common Good in Xenophon's *Education of Cyrus*," American Political Science Review 90, no. 2 (June,1996): 361-374.

words of Dean Rusk: "If you don't keep an eye on problems in the periphery, the periphery soon becomes the center."[270] A republic, like United States, bounds its universal principles within a constitution. Even though the universal principles are applicable to republic's citizens, their universality creates the temptation that as the Republic grows stronger the bounded sphere will be increased to include more people. To merge Pocock and Rusk's language, if the domestic universal principles can be promoted successfully in the periphery, then the centre will not be threatened. In the language of Machiavelli, the republic could expand until the whole world was the republic. The republic faces a constant struggle to meet internal threats to its domestic sphere, corruption, and avoid the temptation to expanding to "solve" the external threats. A balance is needed to avoiding this "imperial temptation".[271] In a republic, a balance must be maintained between promote and defend those universal rights from corruption and what can be done externally to defend and promote those universal principles from threats abroad.

A balance between a republic's internal requirements and the external threats is difficult, but not impossible, to maintain. Johnson and Rusk threatened that balance by attempting to promote the universal values, limited to the domestic sphere, to the whole world. This creates a problem for a republic because it must keep its internal and external priorities balanced. If the republic focuses too much on one or the other, it threatens the balance that is vital to its survival. The key problem, as Machiavelli points out, is to remain strong enough to defend oneself, but avoid being tempted by that strength to overextend. The constitution could act to limit the temptation to expand but keep the internal threats to the stability in check.

> I believe without any doubt; that if such an entity could be held in balance this way, the result would be a true body politic and true tranquillity in a city. But since all human affairs are in continual motion... and reason does not always lead you to the many things to which necessity leads you, so that if a republic were to be capable of maintaining itself without expansion, and necessity forced it to expand, its foundations would be demolished and its would be brought to ruin very quickly.[272]

Machiavelli points to a continual tension within a republic. A changing world requires the republic to adapt. The 1960s were a turbulent decade full of enormous political, economic, and social change in the international system and in the United States. In 1965, Johnson attempted to wage a

[270] See DOSB 22 May 1961, p. 763.
[271] See for example Ronald Steel, Temptations of a Superpower (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).
[272] Machiavelli, Discourses, I.6 p. 37.

limited war while undertaking dramatic domestic reforms. The reforms were an attempt to contain the domestic turbulence and the war was an attempt to contain the international turbulence.

In J.G.A. Pocock's language of the Machiavellian Moment, change through military aggression could be understood as the "irrational" events that challenged a republic's existence. The challenge exists because Rusk identified South Vietnam's security with the security of the United States. Moreover, the world order that the United States had pledged to defend was threatened by the communist inspired wars of national liberation. Following the Truman Doctrine, Rusk believed that the security and stability of the world order that the United States had pledged to defend depended on resisting these wars. While the United States was not expanding its *imperium,*[273] it had expanded its security by identifying the threat to South Vietnam as a threat to the world order it was trying to uphold. By identifying the security of the United States with the security of a world order, Rusk committed the United States to a dangerous path that Machiavelli had warned against. Machiavelli argued that when Rome had to expand imperialistically to ensure its security, it faced the added danger that if it failed to expand, it would face internal corruption and decay.[274] The danger for the United States, after pledging to defend the security of a world order, was that it would face severe domestic consequences if it was unable to fulfil that obligation.

Although Rusk promoted the United States' global role, he was quick to point out that America was expanding its commitments, not its dominion. According to Rusk, the United States was attempting to promote the rule of law as outlined in the UN charter. The United States was therefor not acting only in its interest, but the world's interest. However, in accepting this "expansive" role, Johnson and Rusk accepted, at philosophical level, that that the United States had to expand its efforts to fulfil the liberal internationalist principles. In geopolitical terms, the United States had accepted the full burdens of globalism.

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[273] The United States was not seeking to expand its rule over another people as suggested in the word's original meaning. It was attempting, the fulfilment of the Truman Doctrine, to help South Vietnam determine its future free from the threat of physical coercion. See J.S. Richardson, "*Imperium Romanum*: Empire and the Language of Power," Journal of Roman Studies 81 (1991): 1-9.

[274] Joseph Schumpeter argued that Rome's interests expanded because even if her direct interest was not at stake then the interest of an ally was at stake which would bring Rome into the conflict. See Joseph A. Schumpeter, Imperialism and Social Classes trans. Heinz Norden ed. Paul M. Sweezy (Oxford: Blackwell, 1951), p. 66.

The attempt to fulfil liberal internationalism created an imbalance between commitment and resources that highlighted the tension between foreign and domestic policy.[275] Johnson failed to choose the war effort or reforms, and that put the United States economy between two conflicting and diverging goals. The failure to choose reforms or the war had two interconnected economic consequences. First, the defence build up created an inflationary trend that lasted into the next administration. Second, the domestic economic dislocations, in particular the inflation, disrupted the balance of payments' position and undermined the international monetary system. The economic consequences were a direct result of the 28 July 1965 decision because it sent the United States economy on the diverging paths of paying for the war and paying for domestic reforms.

Lyndon Johnson entered the war as uncertain over the economic effects as he was over the political effects. At first, Johnson believed that he could afford the war and the reforms at the same time because his economic advisers suggested such a possibility.[276] However, their advice was based on a flawed economic forecasting created in part by incorrect information. The economic advisers had not been fully informed of how much the war might cost. They were told that the defence build up would not be very large and that the war would be over by the end of the 1967 fiscal year. As a result, they believed that economy could accommodate the initial defence build up. Yet, when the build up threatened to overheat the economy in December 1965, the advisers quickly suggested a tax cut.[277]

The forecasting problems were created by several overlapping factors; Johnson's apparent indirection, faulty economic forecasting, and conflicting economic theories that offered different

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[275] Resources focuses on the economic problems, but a similar argument can be made regarding the problem of civil rights. The United States was trying to fulfil simultaneously the universal rights at home and abroad. However, to meet one or the other successfully would require the country's full attention. One or the other would have had to been put on hold. Unfortunately, Johnson tried to have both and he failed. The Civil Rights legislation while impervious was not as far reaching as it could have been if the United States was not fighting a war in Vietnam.
[276] On 30 July 1965 Gerald Ackley sent a memo to Johnson suggesting that the United States economy had room to handle a defence build up. See Kettl, "Economic Education," p. 58.
[277] David Halberstam in the Best and the Brightest, p. 736 argues that Johnson intentionally hid the cost of the war from his economic advisors. Kettl offers an alternative assessment that suggests less deviousness and more uncertainty that lead to Johnson's activities. The section draws heavily on the work of Kettl, Kauffman and Matusow.

responses.[278] Johnson did not make the necessary tax cut at the time because he did not think he could get the votes. Moreover, he did not want to force a tax cut that might imperil his Great Society programs. The political process hampered and delayed the necessary economic adjustments. As Kettl pointed out: "Johnson and his economic advisers overestimated how easy it would be to apply fiscal stimulus--and underestimated how difficult it would later be to apply restraint."[279] In that regard, the economic struggle for a tax cut mirrored the military problems in Vietnam. Just as Rusk and Johnson underestimated North Vietnam's resolve and overestimated the public's patience, Johnson underestimated the effect of the economic stimulus and overestimated his ability to restrain the economy.[280]

Economic policy and foreign policy were linked because they were two areas where Johnson had to rely on the judgements of others rather than his own instincts. The policy choices and uncertainties were similar. In Vietnam, the politico-military strategy of limited war required the president to find the right amount of coercion to avoid World War Three, but, at the same time, do enough to stop North Vietnam. In the economic struggle at home the president had to find the proper fiscal and monetary policy balance to bring inflation under control, but maintain economic growth. As a result, the economy like the war suffered from Johnson's inability to make the necessarily tough decisions. The economy suffered a debilitating series of stop and go measures for several reasons. First, the economic advisers were uncertain of the cost of the war. Second, the economic advisers were divided over the proper fiscal and monetary policy responses to pursue. Third, perhaps most importantly, Johnson lacked the political will to confront the economic questions.

The massive defence spending for the Vietnam war and the inconsistent economic policies weakened the United States' economy. The weakness had domestic and international consequences. The economic consequences demonstrated the imprudence of attempting to fight a war and carry out reforms at the same time. The domestic consequence was an unstable economy prone to wide swings in the growth rate. The inconsistent fiscal, monetary, and tax policy

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[278] On the question of deception see Halberstam, Best and the Brightest, p. 734. See Kettl for blame being placed on poor forecasting. Matusow and Eckstein argue that conflicting economic theories confused the economic analysis.
[279] Kettl, "Economic Education", p. 56.
[280] Rusk, As I Saw It, p. 419.

decisions helped to create an inflationary spiral within the economy. The international consequence was a steadily weakening international monetary system. The domestic economic problems contributed to a deteriorating balance of payment situation which, in turn, created uncertainty and instability in the international monetary system. The United States attempted to export the inflation created by the defence build up and this contributed to the instability in the monetary system. To offset the increased demand at home, the United States imported more than it exported creating a current account deficit. To finance this deficit, it reduced its balance of payments abroad. The balance of payments had been in crisis when Kennedy assumed office, but the Vietnam build up under Johnson created an insoluble problem.[281] The United States could have either the war or reforms without inflation, but not both. If it tried to have both, it would create more problems for the international monetary system.

The political evidence that suggests the imbalance between foreign policy and domestic policy commitments is the emergence of the anti-war protests. These protests increased as the United States' involvement increased. The initial support for the war soon turned to protest as the United States appeared bogged down in a war without end. The emergence of the anti-war movement was the political consequence of the imbalance between war and reforms. The anti-war movement, by protesting the foreign policy was seeking to turn the attention inward. The anti-war protests, their origin, effect, and history, have been explored in depth elsewhere.[282] The goal here is to suggest that the domestic reaction to the foreign policy commitment wanted the war stopped and attention to be focused on domestic matters. There were many motives for this, but those of interest were those who were concerned with the failure and underfunding of the domestic economic and political reforms. The economic concerns were raised over the failure to fight the war on poverty or to rejuvenate American cities. The political concerns were focused on the slowness of civil rights reforms.

The second claim is that the United States government level, the limited and balanced government was threatened by the growth of the executive branch's power. The

[281] See Collins "The Economic Crisis of 1968" 396-422.

[282] See for example, Melvin Small, Johnson, Nixon and the Doves (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988) and Charles Debenedetti and Charles Chatfield, An American Ordeal : The Antiwar Movement of the Vietnam War (Syracuse Studies on Peace and Conflict Resolution), (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990).

executive grew stronger at the expense of the legislative branch. The growth of the executive branch's power can be seen most noticeably in the president waging an undeclared war at the expense of the legislative branch.[283] At a less direct level, it can be seen in the pace and sheer amount of legislation initiated by the executive and Johnson's political tactics of blurring the lines between the executive and legislative branches.

Machiavelli had warned that a republic's foundations could be threatened if it expanded. For the United States, the military intervention to support the extended foreign policy commitment can be considered such an expansion. The "expanded" foreign policy commitments created a possible threat to the constitutional balance within the American regime. While the United States never became an empire, the Vietnam war exposed an underlying problem in the balance between the executive and the legislative branch over the constitutional power to wage war.[284] In the realm of foreign affairs the president has tremendous power because he has constitutional responsibility for carrying out foreign policy. As the constitution is a unitary document, the powers accrued to deal with foreign policy have an influence in the domestic sphere. In foreign affairs the president has tremendous powers as the commander in chief and the powers have increased as the nation's foreign policy responsibilities have increased.

The trend towards a more powerful executive had begun when Franklin Roosevelt was granted emergency powers by Congress to deal with the Depression.[285] To prepare the United States for World War Two, Roosevelt relied upon the precedent created by these powers.[286] World War Two and its aftermath created greater foreign policy responsibilities for the President. To meet these responsibilities, the President's powers increased. Unlike Johnson, however, Roosevelt had a declaration of war from Congress. Roosevelt, under the necessity of the war, increased his power without relying solely on his prerogative powers or by relying on his authority as

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[283] For a fuller discussion of the imbalance between the president and Congress, see Gordon Silverstein, Imbalance of Powers: Constitutional interpretation and the making of American foreign policy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[284] On this issue see David P. Forsythe and Ryan C. Hendrickson, "The Use of Force Abroad: What Law for the President?" Presidential Studies Quarterly 26, no. 4 (Fall 1996): 950-961.

[285] See for example Walter LaFeber, "American Empire, American Raj" chap. in America Unbound: World War II and the making of a superpower ed. Warren F. Kimball, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), p. 56.

[286] Edward S. Corwin, The President Office and Powers, 178-1984 history and analysis of practice and opinion 5th Rev. Eds. Randall W. Bland, Theodore T. Hindson, and Jack W. Peltason (New York: New York University Press, 1984).

Commander in Chief.[287] In this regard the declaration of war represented a culminating point of increased presidential power rather than a starting point. The full impact of the changes wrought by Roosevelt's imperial presidency remained subdued until Lyndon Johnson took office. When Johnson pursued an undeclared war, on the president' prerogative power, he re-opened the debate over the imperial presidency.

According to Arthur Schlesinger, in his book Imperial Presidency, Johnson relied on Congress to support the war rather than sanction it.[288] Johnson's approach to the war and the executive-legislative relationship suggested that the executive was dominating the legislative branch. Under Johnson, the executive branch appeared to be centralising power by keeping the Congress from taking any foreign policy role more active than supporting his war. The imbalance between the president and Congress over the Vietnam war had several sources. The most immediate was that Johnson was better informed than his Congressional critics. He could use the superior intelligence to manipulate a decision by shaping the context that it was presented. For example, when Johnson was exploring a possible tax increase, he never mentioned that he needed the money to pay for Vietnam to keep Congress from becoming aware of the true cost of the war.[289] While all Presidents use their intelligence superiority to their advantage, Johnson often went to great lengths to manipulate his audience based upon the information that he alone possessed.

A second source for the president's advantage was that Johnson argued he had all the Congressional consent and sanction he needed through the passage of the Gulf of Tonkin resolution. In this regard he stressed the president's prerogative in foreign policy. However, Attorney General Katzenbach, while giving legal advice on Johnson's authority to commit troops to Vietnam, couched the argument to deflect attention from the requirements of declaring war. He suggested a specific interpretation of what declaring war required.

> I believe it fair, although not uncontroversial, summary of nearly two centuries of history to say that the power to "declare war" is the power to confer substantially unlimited authority to use the armed forces to conquer and, if necessary, subdue a foreign nation. Unless such unlimited authority is exercised by the President, his legal position in using the armed forces is sustainable.[290]

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[287] Arthur M. Schlesinger, The Imperial Presidency with a new epilogue (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989), p.115.
[288] Schlesinger, Imperial, p.181.
[289] See Matusow, Unravelling, pp. 155-179.
[290] FRUS 1964-1968 Vietnam Volume II p. 752.

Katzenbach focused on Johnson's declared intention to keep the war limited without addressing the fuller constitutional principle involved. However, it must be kept in mind that Congress did not act immediately to limit the President's actions.[291] Johnson had relied upon his superior intelligence information in foreign affairs to present a fait accompli to Congress in which patriotic support for armed forces abroad muted criticism. This is not to say that Johnson intended to deceive Congress. The manoeuvre was an example of a well-played act of political judo that yielded short term benefits, but created a long term problem. Johnson could not have achieved this goal without a third source for the imbalance between the executive and the legislative; his intimate knowledge of the Senate.

Johnson, as former Senate Majority Leader, had an excellent understanding of the Senate. His mastery of the Senate helped him to control it in a way that no other president had. That mastery and his intimate knowledge of the Senate led him to work very closely with the Congress in a way that blurred the line between the executive and the legislative branches.[292] As Doris Kearns pointed out, the height of Johnson's power and the most obvious shift in balance was his commitment of American troops overseas without directly consulting Congress.[293] Kearns suggests Johnson was blurring the executive-legislative relationship to the point where the legislature was in danger of being co-opted.[294]

When Johnson blurred the line between the executive and the legislative and manipulated Congress through indirection, he threatened to create an imbalance within the balanced government. The slow centralisation of power in the executive branch was making it more powerful at the expense of the legislative and judicial branches. Such an imbalance, according to

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[291] Ibid. Katzenbach Memo goes on to address this point and thus suggests, indirectly, that the Gulf of Tonkin, until it is reversed or suspended, can been used as justification for the president's actions so long as they do not infringe on Congress' right to declare war. Moreover, Johnson was worried that by seeking a declaration of war, he would invite greater Congressional involvement and thus scrutiny of his policies. Katzenbach addressed that issue by stressing that such a possibility only exists if the President infringe on Congressional powers...."There is authority, however, indicating that in areas where both Executive and Congressional powers are operative, the Executive must observe the limits of any Congressional authorization that may be enacted even though, in the absence of any authorization, his Executive powers under the Constitution would clearly go beyond the Congressional grant." See also Silverstein, Imbalance of Powers.
[292] Kearns, American Dream, p. 222.
[293] This stemmed from Johnson's belief that he already had consulted Congress with the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, but it also reflected the belief in the President's powers as commander in chief.
[294] Kearns, American Dream, p. 222.

Pocock, is an initial sign of corruption within a republic and a step towards empire.[295] Johnson strengthen the executive branch in two ways. First, he exercised his prerogative in foreign affairs to wage the undeclared war. Second, he pushed through domestic reforms that expanded the power of the federal government and by extension the executive branch. The point is not to suggest that Johnson intended to centralise power, but that his foreign and domestic policies increased the power of the central government and thereby the power of the executive branch.

The undeclared war suggested an imbalance between the branches in two ways. First, Congress was not consulted fully. Second, the Johnson undertook the foreign policy actions while working very closely with Congress to pass extensive domestic reforms. This is not to suggest that Johnson was intentionally pursuing a massive domestic program to distract Congress from his foreign policy. It is to suggest that the large amount of legislation helped him to avoid scrutiny on his foreign policy. Johnson, by working so closely with the legislature, appeared to be blurring the traditional separation of the executive and legislative branches. Ironically, this helped him to achieve the reforms while at the same time he was relying on the separation of powers to have a free hand in foreign policy. This is not meant to suggest that he was intentionally using the domestic reforms to hide the war. On the contrary, the conflicting purposes show the divided nature of the war and reforms because they were pulling the president in diverging directions. Only Johnson, so long as he could straddle both diverging lines, could keep the implicit imbalance from becoming overt. To that end, it was imperative to avoid a debate on the war.

Johnson avoided a debate and a declaration of war, in part, because he did not want his authority to be limited by having a full debate over his foreign policy because he worried that a debate over foreign policy would derail his Great Society Program.[296] However, a debate and a declaration of war would demonstrate the balance of powers because the president would have sought Congress's sanction and consent. Instead of a debate, however, Congress and the American

[295] One is tempted to analyse the domestic unrest through a Lockean lens. According to Locke, if there is a conflict between the executive and the legislature, the people will decide the matter. How will they do this? By acting in a variety of ways "including public opinion, general willingness to remain obedient to government actions, elections when those are relevant, and , finally, revolutions." See Michael P. Zuckert Hobbes, Locke, and the problem of the rule of law" in NOMOS XXXVI Yearbook of the American Society of Political and Legal Philosophy The Rule of Law. ed. Ian Shapiro, (New York University: New York, 1994), p. 75.
[296] Matusow, Unraveling, p. 160.

public were limited, in large part, to consenting to the president's actions without being given a chance to sanction them.

In Johnson's defence, it has been argued that a declaration of war could have turned a limited war into a global nuclear war. This possibility does not diminish the need for a debate and a thorough consultation with Congress.[297] The undeclared war exacerbated the differences between the Executive and the Legislative branches. The struggle between the executive and the legislature was reflected in the public's protestations over the war as the public demanded that the foreign policy actions be explained. The administration, and the president, came under increasing pressure from the public to explain and justify the United States' involvement in Vietnam. Indirectly, the public was reasserting the balance between the two branches by demanding debate and information about the administration's foreign policy actions.[298] In the end, the Congress, with the support of the people, reasserted its role and the apparent imbalance eased as the United States withdrew from Vietnam. However, the executive's power, especially as Commander in Chief, represents an enduring constitutional question. As has been remarked, the United States appears to face a constitutional crisis each time it uses military force abroad.[299] The danger of the imperial president, in a different guise, still remains a distinct possibility.[300] The extensive foreign policy responsibilities created by the United States extensive foreign policy commitments require extensive presidential powers.

The undeclared war and Johnson's reliance on his powers as the Commander in Chief created constitutional questions and consequences that reflect crisis of the Machiavellian Moment because they suggested an imbalance within the regime. In the language of the Machiavelli Moment, the President acted imperially rather than democratically in committing the United States to war. In his book, Imperial Presidency, Schlesinger focused on the increased power of the

[297] See Jacob K. Javits, "The Congressional Presence in Foreign Relations," Foreign Affairs 48 (January 1970): 226. See also Cecil V. Crabb and Pat M. Hold, Invitation to Struggle: Congress, the President and Foreign Policy (Washington D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1980). p. 45.
[298] On this point see note 121.
[299] Forsythe and Hendrickson, "U.S. Use of Force", p. 950.
[300] One can certainly speculate on the relationship of the imperial presidency to the foreign policy commitments of the United States. Hadley Arkes argues that the two realms can be reconciled by returning to a natural rights understanding of the Constitution and the role of the Executive. See Hadley Arkes, The Return of George Sutherland: Restoring a Jurisprudence of Natural Rights (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

president in the post World War Two era. In particular, he stressed the shift in the balance of power between the President and the Congress based upon the president's undeclared wars. The direct constitutional consequence of 28 July 1965 was a backlash by Congress which led to the War Powers Act. In that regard, 1965 marks the high-water point of the executive power.

The failure to seek a declaration of war reflects Johnson's "flawed" political personality and his decision making style. Johnson pursued a middle path, of an undeclared war, between two extremes. The extreme that he wanted to avoid was an unpopular debate over a declaration of war. The other extreme that he sought to avoid was gaining a declaration of war. Johnson and his advisers wanted to avoid a declaration of war to avoid creating a war fever at home or alarming the Soviet Union or China.[301] However, choosing an extreme might have been the best choice at this point. A debate may have saved Johnson from expanding the commitment to Vietnam because it would have alerted the public to the magnitude of the crisis. If the debate did not avoid commitment, it would have given him the resources to succeed. Moreover, it would have either made Congress responsible for the war or for the failure to intervene.

The problem of the undeclared war was compounded by how Johnson viewed his commitment to South Vietnam. Johnson believed that commitment, staying the course and holding firm, was the middle path between the extremes of withdrawal or all out escalation. A wiser choice might have been pursuing a policy extreme, rather than trying to find a middle path. Such a policy extreme might have been to seek a declaration of war and get the country behind him. While declaring war was impractical for a variety of domestic political reasons, its impracticality should have encouraged Johnson to set a troop limit for his "holding firm" policy choice. Johnson was led by events in Vietnam and his desire to avoid losing to choose a gradual escalation. Kennedy had consistently increased his involvement, but he had done so without officially committing troops with the stated purpose of fighting. Unlike Johnson, Kennedy kept the basic commitment ambiguous even as he increased his involvement to protect that commitment. Even though the term "adviser" may have been a political disguise for the troops, it gave Kennedy political flexibility. It allowed him to help South Vietnam with its military problems without it raising the

[301] Rusk, As I Saw It, p. 456.

question of declaring war.[302] Johnson, by fixing the commitment, could only have flexibility along the escalatory ladder not in his policy choices.

Johnson faced a very different situation on 28 July 1965 than Kennedy had faced in 1961. Johnson did not have a flexible situation. The military situation had changed in Vietnam and thus the middle path options that were open to Kennedy, were no longer open to Johnson. In other words, Johnson did not have the same flexibility as Kennedy. In late 1964, North Vietnam escalated the conflict through by increasing troop infiltration into the South. The change meant that holding firm, which had been the flexible middle path between withdrawal and escalation, before, had now become a policy extreme tantamount to withdrawal. If the United States held firm, did not increase its effort, South Vietnam would have been defeated. The "new" policy extreme was again escalation, but it was now described as a fast build up, the "fast squeeze" option. The new middle path between the extremes of holding firm or the "fast squeeze" had to be found. Johnson chose the flawed middle path of gradual involvement.[303]

Johnson might have made a wiser choice by selecting one of the extremes. For example, Johnson could have held firm, as Dean Rusk suggested, without escalating or withdrawing. Holding firm was an extreme position just as fast escalation was an extreme position. Johnson could have held firm by supplying logistics or trainers. This course of action would have avoided a direct and official combat role for United States troops. In this option, the responsibility for the war would have remained with the South Vietnamese army and leadership. However, this is very speculative for two reasons. The first was that following the 1963 coup and Kennedy's death, the United States took responsibly for the survival of South Vietnam and Johnson believed that he had to stay the course with Kennedy's policy. The second was that the South Vietnamese army was not prepared to fight successfully without a large infusion of United States troops. It would be several years before the South Vietnamese were prepared to fight on their own, but by then the war had changed dramatically. Moreover, Johnson did not believe he could tolerate politically the "loss" of South Vietnam.

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[302] See Bostdorff and Goldzwig "Idealism and Pragmatism" pp. 515-530.
[303] Dallek, Flawed Giant, p. 214. The Working Group gave Johnson three policy choices, continue at present rate while seeking negotiations, increase sharply or slowly increase the pressure against Hanoi.

Had Johnson declared war, he would have avoided the constitutional consequences of an undeclared war. He would not have avoided the crisis created by the imbalance between the United States' unlimited foreign policy commitments and the domestically bounded universal principles that created the commitments. Johnson avoided an Imperial war by not declaring war, but the possibility to declare war existed until 31 March 1968. Until then, the United States remained poised at the brink of empire.[304] The steps towards empire would have been hastened if Johnson had declared war. In other words, the United States would have decided the question between its domestic principles and its foreign policy commitments. By declaring war, domestic reforms would have been stopped and attention would have focused on defending and expanding the universal principles within the world order rather than at home. In other words, the United States would be fighting to defend its universal principles abroad while denying are at least delaying them at home. The United States would be mobilising not to defend its physical security, but to defend and promote its world order. Finally, Johnson would have been hard pressed to keep the war from widening, going North, if he had declared war. An invasion of North Vietnam would have been more conceivable with a declared war. At that point, the United States would have confronted the question of whether it was willing to fight to re-organise Eurasia because China would have become involved. Charles De Gaulle warned of this potential problem.

De Gaulle had warned Rusk, America would have to fight for all of Eurasia if it was to "win" in South Vietnam.[305] That "total" goal may have become explicit following a declaration of war because it would have created the need for a "total" war rather than a limited, undeclared, war. A total war would have required total victory rather than the limited goals that the limited war theory suggested should be achieved. Rusk responded to De Gaulle by explaining that the United States was only interested in limited goals and therefore limited means. However, De Gaulle understood what was at stake if the United States was truly trying to defend a world order. The struggle between competing world orders does not suggest limited goals and therefore implies a total war. In contrast, Rusk saw the conflict as a limited war in pursuit of limited goals even though they were justified by a universal ideal. To put it in the terms of the Machiavellian

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304 Roger Hilsman, "Must We Invade the North?" Foreign Affairs 46 (April 1968): 425-441 Hilsman argues that the United States still might invade North Vietnam.

305 Gardner, Pay Any Price, p.155.

Moment, De Gaulle understood the problem in the language of an Empire. An Empire defending its professed world order would require a total war. Rusk couched his approach in the language of a Republic because he took a limited approach. His approach reflected the bounded or restrained universalism that exemplified the American republic. De Gaulle expressed concerns regarding the geopolitical situation. These concerns hinted at the possible consequences of desiring victory. He understood that if the United States was going to "win" in South Vietnam it would have to fight for Eurasia. He ended the line of questioning by asking "Then what?" Thus, a victory would require total war, but a total war would require total effort or mobilisation. If the United States was to achieve "victory" it would have to change itself by focusing completely on its war effort. Domestic reforms would be ignored as the country mobilised for war to achieve the universal ideal. De Gaulle was suggesting that "victory" would require the United States to become an empire, in the sense that the United States could not find a limited solution that Rusk insisted was possible. In sum, De Gaulle, by warning of the futile search for "victory", because it would require a war for Eurasia, was not only warning Rusk of the physical challenges in Vietnam, but the philosophical challenge.

The "victory" effort that De Gaulle suggested was necessary would have required great changes in the domestic structure. Rusk and Johnson wanted to avoid the need for these changes and thereby sought to keep the war limited in ends and means. However, this does not mean that the United States becomes an empire any time it declares war, but to suggest that a war would keep the domestic structure fixed for the war's duration. A war would put domestic reforms on hold or at the least slow their pace. The war would divert attention and effort from domestic reforms.. The domestic reforms needed to bring the universal principles to all Americans, for example civil rights, would have been delayed until the war was concluded. A declared war opens the larger question of how long would the United States have to stay in a state of war given South Vietnam's vulnerable position.[306] The problem of the imbalance between domestic principles and foreign policy commitments is even more noticeable when one realises that the war is being waged to defend principles abroad that are not fulfilled at home.

[306] Ibid., p. 156. Gardner cites a memo by Douglas Cater's memo from December 1964 suggesting that if the United States stays the course in South Vietnam it may have to be engaged in a war for twenty to thirty years.

An apparent imbalance between the Executive and the Legislature emerged when Johnson undertook an undeclared ground war in Vietnam. The imbalance within the regime reflected the imbalance between the domestic and foreign policy. The United States was attempting to pursue a war to defend a world order, that reflected its domestic regime, while simultaneously undertaking a far reaching reforms within the regime. To carry out the reforms required a stronger central government. In an indirect way, Johnson was fulfilling his promise to bring the Great Society to the world and to the United States. However, to achieve both would require a powerful executive. The United States was not committed to an undeclared war in Vietnam simply to fulfil Johnson's ambitions. The goal was to defend the United States credibility and a world order. In doing so, the task required a strong executive as did the domestic reforms. The two combined to create an imbalance between the executive and legislative branches. The commitment forced the United States to confront the question of whether it was to become an empire, to fulfil the commitment to the world order, or whether it was going to remain a republic, by refusing to expand the war and thereby fail to fulfil its commitment.[307] The United States had to choose between reforming the world, or reforming itself. It could not achieve both at the same time. A war to uphold the world order was beyond its resources as a republic, but it would not have been beyond the resources of an empire devoted to expanding the universal ideal. The United States accepted its limits and chose to remain a republic. The United States leadership prudently matched its commitments to its resources in choosing not to escalate the war in Vietnam when that was the only way to avoid defeat.

The third claim is that the United States committed itself to defend a world order and confronted the philosophical question: Republic or Empire?

Robert Tucker posed the question, in a slightly different manner, with his essay Nation or Empire. The United States intervened in Vietnam to fulfil the Truman Doctrine. The Truman Doctrine created a justification for defending the free world order. According to Dean Rusk, the United States had identified its security with the security of the world order and that world order

[307] By expanding the war, I do not mean simply escalating the combat in South Vietnam. I mean widening the war by invading North Vietnam. This, I think would require the United States to declare war.

was being challenged in Vietnam.[308] If military aggression was not defeated in Vietnam, then it would create a dangerous precedent. The precedent would demonstrate the failure of a collective security, which was regarded as a central pillar for the security of the world order. In Vietnam, the United States was defending the world order to fulfil its globalist foreign policy. Yet, by identifying its security with the security of the world order, the United States had undertaken an implicit imperial role.

The United States undertook a massive unilateral intervention to defend and maintain its global foreign policy and that intervention created an imbalance within the regime between its domestic policy and its foreign policy. The intervention created an imbalance within the United States as Johnson attempted to undertake war and domestic reforms at the same time. The imbalance created a crisis that forced the United States to confront the limits of its power to meet the demands of its foreign policy. If the United States were to meet the demands of its foreign policy, it would have to take the necessary steps towards empire. First it would end domestic reforms. Second it would have to mobilise for war. This step would further reduce the impetus for reforms and at the same time increase the president's powers. The domestic changes would move the United States towards an empire and away from being a republic. This is not a simple transformation, but the centralisation of power shifted the balance between the executive and the legislative branches. The foreign policy commitment to a world order and the centralisation of power in the federal government and the executive, in particular, forced the United States to confront the question of Republic or Empire.

The United States did not have the power to achieve both domestic reforms and its international commitments and still remain a republic. The United States therefore confronted a difficult choice. Would the United States fulfil its world order role or would it fulfil its domestic promise? Johnson attempted to avoid choice, but his delay only exacerbated the fundamental problem.[309] Using Pocock's concept of the Machiavellian Moment and the danger of an

[308]See for example DOSB 6 April 1964, p. 534. "We dare not falter. For unless the world is made safe for freedom, our own freedom cannot survive."

[309] In many ways, Johnson was in a situation similar to the one faced by Stephen Douglas prior to the civil war and exposed quite brilliantly by Abraham Lincoln during their famous debates. Douglas was trying to fight anti-slavery measures in the north and pro-slavery measures in the south because he did not want slavery as a test for political orthodoxy. In that regard, Douglas feared a Civil War than he believed that slavery was an evil that had to be defeated. See Harry V.

imbalanced government, the third section combines the first two sections to explore how such an imbalanced developed during Johnson's presidency. The imbalance between foreign policy commitments and domestic policy and the imbalance between the executive and the legislative branches were a manifestation of the imbalance within Johnson's presidency. Johnson failed to restrain his ambitions with prudence. The United States reached the brink of a Machiavellian Moment when it confronted, at a philosophical level, whether it was to remain a republic or become an empire.

The United States confronted the choice out of necessity and out of imprudence. The necessity was that the United States, having founded a liberal world order, faced a direct threat to that order by the Soviet Union and the PRC. The United States was imprudent for trying to fight a limited war in Vietnam to defend an open-ended commitment to the world order. However, the threat to the world order or the response were not sufficient, in their own right, to bring the United States to the brink of the Machiavellian Moment. The fateful involvement in Vietnam became dangerous because Johnson attempted to undertake domestic reforms at the same time. An imbalance was created at the societal level because the tasks sent the United States on two diverging paths. To accomplish both tasks would have required a stronger central government and in particular a strong executive to prosecute the war and to execute the reforms. This would have created a grave imbalance at the governmental level. A powerful executive would have potentially threatened the necessary constitutional balance between the executive and legislative branches. Both of these imbalances created at a philosophical level the danger of an imbalance within the republic and the temptation to become an empire. The balanced government within the republic was threatened by the simultaneous push for war and reforms. Ultimately, the United States remained a republic, but the lesson was that a similar threat to a balanced government must be avoided.

The problem at the heart of the United States' foreign policy was reconciling its purpose, constitution, with a world order. As Rusk said, the United States was fighting to defend the world order enshrined in the UN charter because the charter reflected principles enshrined in the

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Jaffa, Crisis of the House Divided: Am interpretation of the issues in the Lincoln-Douglas debates (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973), pp. 58-52.

Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Even though Rusk's statements tried to connect the United States' security with the security of the world order, Robert Tucker points out that the statements did not garnering much public support for America's involvement.

> The dilemma of the Johnson administration has been its apparent inability successfully to represent the war in Vietnam either as a vindication of the principles of freedom and self-determination or as a measure indispensable for American security. [310]

Rusk and Johnson did not create the commitment to South Vietnam or the Truman Doctrine. Their justifications failed to garner support because of the apparent gap between the security of the world order and the United States security. The American public doubted that the United States' security was at stake in South Vietnam even though Rusk and Johnson identified the United States security with the stability of the world order. To justify that commitment, they tried to rely upon the precedent set by the United States' involvement in the Korean war to create the precedent for the Vietnam intervention.

> Then as now American power and leadership were to be employed to create and maintain a stable world order, an order which would enable peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way and, by enabling them to do so, thereby insure American security.[311]

However, the Korean war carried with it a UN mandate but the Vietnam intervention did not have that mandate. This difference reflects, in part, why the United States confronts, in Vietnam, the question of nation or empire. In Korea, the United States was upholding the UN mandate that had identified the conflict as a threat to international peace and security, not simply acting to defend its own security. In Vietnam, the United States hinted at that justification but never obtained a UN mandate. Instead, the United States, as Rusk stated, had identified the security of South Vietnam and the security of the world order with the security of the United States. The United States claimed to be defending the UN world order, but it had identified the world order with the United States' security. The gap between the United States world order and the UN world order demonstrates the difference between Empire and Republic.

In Korea, the United States fought as a republic, because it had fought to uphold the UN world order, an order that it was a member. The United States remained a republic because it had only a limited engagement as part of the UN. The war in Korea was a threat to the UN world order

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310 Tucker, Nation or Empire, p. 17.
311 Ibid., p. 20.

that the United States supported. In Vietnam the United States was on the brink of fighting as an empire because it had identified itself unilaterally with the world order. The United States was not simply part of the world order, but it had identified itself with the world order. It had undertaken an open-ended commitment by identifying its security with the security of the world order. Any threat to the world order was a threat to the United States. The United States faced the question of whether it was to remain a republic, to maintain a limited commitment, or to become an empire, and accept the open-ended commitment.

> The significance of the debate is not that it raises the issue whether foreign or domestic policy ought to be primary, at least, not in a general sense. Instead, it raises the issue whether a certain kind of foreign policy should continue to be affirmed on behalf of a policy that may involve the use of force to vindicate interests that, at best, are only indirectly related to the security of America (and that are increasingly held to have little relation even to the traditional purpose of America). At the root of the debate over American foreign policy is the fundamental question that has arisen for every nation which has achieved a certain degree of pre-eminence and relative freedom: nation or empire?[312]

Tucker argues that one cannot avoid the question of nation or empire by suggesting that the domestic realm is not effected by foreign policy decisions. One must understand that domestic and foreign policy issues are linked by how a nation conceives its purpose in the world.

> Nor is it sufficient when dismissing the relevance of the question--nation or empire?-- simply to reaffirm that the American dream remains domestic. If there is necessarily a point--for America as for all nations--at which foreign policy has primacy over domestic policy, the all-important issue is the manner in which the security requirements of the nation are conceived.[313]

Thucydides raised the same question in Book VIII of the History of the Peloponnesian War. He shows how Athens became corrupted as the political logic used to justify the empire was used to justify domestic politics. The politics of expediency that had justified the empire replaced the pursuit of honour and the common good within the domestic sphere.[314] Did Johnson and Rusk conceive of the United States foreign policy in terms of its domestic commitment to republican principles and a balanced government? Or, did they view the United States' purpose connected to the maintenance of a world order?

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[312]Ibid., p. 39.

[313]Ibid., p. 47.

[314] See Steven Forde, The Ambition to Rule : Alcibiades and the Politics of Imperialism in Thucydides (Cornell University Press: Ithaca (NY), 1989), p. 142. A key difference though is that Athens was corrupted when its domestic politics began to reflect its empire. The domestic politics were conducted differently from how the empire was conducted. However, the United States did not attempt to conduct its foreign relations much differently from its domestic politics. While the United States recognised a difference between the two realms, it followed the similar principles in both areas.

The dilemma stems from Johnson's hubris; his belief that the United States could afford the war and the reforms. He did not see a gap between what the United States should achieve and could achieve in South Vietnam. In sum, the United States' purpose had been identified with a world order because Rusk and Johnson believed that the United States had a duty, based up its power and principle, to meet those demands.

The war in Vietnam demanded more from the domestic realm than it could to sustain given the constraints imposed by domestic reforms. The domestic political regime contributes to foreign policy by determining, in large part, the nation's purpose. An imbalance between the domestic realm and the external realm creates a crisis. The United States had determined that its security, or the security of its world order, required that it intervene in Vietnam. That goal and, in particular, the effort required were not clearly recognised by the American public. They were focused on the domestic state of affairs and making the American dream a reality. The massive foreign policy effort with a vague goal that lacked any sense of urgency represented a distraction and not a necessary alternative to domestic reforms. As the United States undertook an imperial mission for the external world order, it was undertaking massive reform of the domestic order that turned America's attention inward.

The danger created by the various imbalances was not simply the trade off between the nation's internal and external requirements, but it represented a threat to the American regime. According to Pocock, a central danger to a republic was the danger that the citizens would become corrupted and lose the necessary virtue to maintain the republic. If the citizens lost their ability to rule themselves by virtue, then the regime would collapse. The added danger was that the corruption in the citizens would be matched by a corruption within the Republic's institutions. An example of the danger of corruption within the Republic's institutions was the threat to the balanced government. If the executive branch begins the dominate the legislative branch, then the balanced government necessary to maintain a republic is threatened. A further danger is that the people, who have lost their political *virtu*, will become dependent upon the government and a stronger executive will mean they become dependent upon the executive.

> But since the crucial disturbance was no longer taking place in the relation of lords to commons, the balance being disturbed might better be seen as one of powers rather than estates; it was the executive that threatened to encroach upon the legislature, and the problem of

> patronage led to a century and more of debate concerning the separation and interdependence of the power of the constitution. To qualify as corruption, however, the encroachment of the executive must be seen as more than infringement of the sphere of legislative action.[315]

The danger is that individuals will become dependent upon the government and transfer their dependence from the legislative branch to the executive branch which has begun to take over the legislative functions. Citizens of a Republican fear that as the government, the executive, increases its power and its involvement in the daily life of citizens, they will lose their independence and their *virtu*.[316]

Such an imbalance was slowly emerging as a result of the policies pursued by Johnson. He pursued policies that brought more people, for example through civil rights, into full citizenship but at the same time he was making them dependent upon the government through the increased social welfare programs. These programs reached more people, but it also undermined their ability to exercise political *virtu*, by making them dependent upon the central government. The attempt to have both war and reforms could not be sustained. In seeking to find a balance, Johnson created an imbalance because he had not prepared the public or the economy for the war. Johnson sought to avoid a difficult choice. He thought he could avoid the choice because he believed that somehow the situation in South Vietnam would improve. In that regard, Johnson imprudently placed himself at *fortuna's* mercy. In the end, Johnson was dethroned by the cruel turning of *fortuna's* wheel.

For three years, Johnson believed he could balance the imbalance between the diverging paths of foreign and domestic policy. As the war intensified, America's commitment increased and it began to draw resources, intellectual, moral, and monetary away from his domestic programs. The balancing act had become increasingly difficult because the America people were unwilling to continue to support the two conflicting policies. One or the other had to go. Johnson, the master balancer, had hoped that his retirement from the presidential race would resolve the issue. It resolved the issue by sending each policy spinning off into its own decaying orbit. The Vietnam war burned out, for the United States, four years later. The temptation that led to the Vietnam war remains, but it is dampened by war's bitter experience and the changes in the international system.

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[315] Pocock, Machiavellian Moment, p. 420.
[316] Ibid., p. 486.

The Great Society, founded on the bedrock of American idealism, soon decayed into a series of underfunded policies. Johnson had hoped to create a monument and, in many ways, the dream he ignited still remains thirty years later. Republicans and Democrats today live within the husk of Johnson's Great Society. Like a beautiful fireworks, the initial promise lit up the American regime, but only its embers continue to glow.

Chapter Four: Kissinger: Machiavelli's adviser.[317]

The Tet offensive, in January 1968, changed American foreign policy at two levels: the policy level and the philosophical level. This chapter explores how Kissinger's foreign policy philosophy represents a reaction to these changes. In particular, the chapter explores how Kissinger, through his speeches and statements as Secretary of State, offered an alternative to the failed policies of liberal internationalism. In doing so, the chapter begins by discussing the problems that Nixon and Kissinger confronted in the first term. To meet the international and domestic problems created by the Vietnam war; they developed an international structure of peace that reflected the United States changed role in the region and in the world. However, problems in Nixon's second term thwarted the completion or expansion of this structure. In the second term, as Nixon's presidency was under strain from the Watergate crisis, Kissinger was appointed Secretary of State. The chapter continues by focusing on how he confronted the crisis of authority in the United States even as he attempted to preserve the foreign policy structure developed in the first term. As Secretary of States, Kissinger tried to shape a policy that reflected Nixon's limited and pragmatic, although no less ambitious, foreign policy philosophy. In doing so, Kissinger, and Nixon, charted a middle path between two facts. The first was that after the Vietnam War the United States' power was limited. The second was that the United States still had to take an active role in the international realm.

Kissinger, through his speeches, reflected upon the need to reform and restrain the United States' foreign policy because the failed crusade in Vietnam had created an imbalance within foreign policy. The goal was to bring equilibrium, by restraint and reform, to a policy unbalanced by the Vietnam War. To meet this task, Kissinger outlined a new foreign policy philosophy to deal with the changed international system and the limits to the United States' power. His philosophy reflected a relatively modest geopolitical vision that reflected the changes in the United States and the international system. Kissinger's speeches reflected a more restrained vision of the United States, the World, and the United States' role in the world.

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[317] For a fuller understanding of how Machiavelli understood the relationship of an adviser to the prince, see chapters Twenty Two and Twenty Three of The Prince. For a similar view of advisers, see Xenophon, The Education of Cyrus trans. H.G. Dakyns (Everyman's Library ed. Ernest Rhys) (London: J.M.Dent and Sons, 1914) Book 7 Chapter 5 59-62.

At the policy level, the Tet offensive discredited Johnson's Vietnam policy by falsifying the administration's claims of success. Even though the Communist forces suffered a tactical defeat, they achieved an important psychological victory. The United States' Vietnam policy was in severe disarray no one could find a way to win the war or to withdraw. This apparent dilemma created a paralysis within the United States' foreign policy. The war dominated the administration's and the public's attention and this fixation, in turn, exacerbated the economic, social, and political strain created by the war.

At the philosophical, level, the Tet offensive was a catalyst for change. Tet discredited the foreign policy philosophy that justified the United States' involvement in Vietnam. The offensive was the dramatic dénouement of the foreign policy philosophy of liberal internationalism. The failure in Vietnam demonstrated the limits to the United States' power to support the geopolitical policy of globalism.[318] The United States had reached the limit of its ability to intervene and shape world affairs and the failure would have severe domestic consequences.

The Tet offensive put more pressure on the administration. At the general level, the war helped to undermine the post-World War Two liberal consensus over the United States' foreign policy goals of intervening abroad to contain communism and promoting economic and political liberalism.[319] The war divided the American public and to some commentators it appeared that the United States was unraveling.[320] Other critics suggested that the United States' exceptionalism had ended.[321] The foreign policy philosophy, liberal internationalism, which had created and justified the United States' involvement in Vietnam, was discredited. If the United States was to extract itself from Vietnam, heal the internal divisions, and bring its foreign policy into equilibrium, it needed a change in policy.

Lyndon Johnson left a problematic legacy. The Vietnam War had bankrupted, literally and figuratively, the foreign policy philosophy that had created the commitment. In a larger

[318]Robert S. Litwak, Detente and the Nixon Doctrine: American foreign policy and the pursuit of stability, 1969-1976 (Cambridge University Press: London, 1984), p. 117.
[319]See for example Tony Smith, America's Mission : the United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth Century (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994).
[320] See Allen Matusow, The Unraveling of America: A history of liberalism in the 1960s (New York: Harper & Row, 1986). See also Daniel Bell "The End of American Exceptionalism" The Public Interest 41 (1975/76): 193-224.
[321] Bell, "The End of American Exceptionalism" p. 204.

context, the dominant philosophy within American politics, liberalism, was also under attack. The United States' society struggled to reconcile the war's cost with the massive political reforms.[322] The divergence between these domestic and foreign policies helped to create domestic unrest. The conflicting pressures created by the war effort and the domestic reforms had created social and political unrest. The tangible symptoms of the war's cost were domestic inflation, imbalances within the international monetary system and a crisis in the United States' balance of payments.[323] The domestic unrest and criticism generated by opposition to the war criticism helped to dissolve the consensus over the goals and means of foreign policy.[324] The next president confronted a difficult situation. The two central pillars of foreign policy, domestic political support and domestic economic vitality were under strain. The American public, disillusioned by the Vietnam War and the inadequate social reforms, appeared to be turning towards isolationism.[325] At the same time, the economy was under increasing strain from inflation created by the war effort.

In 1968, the public wanted a change in foreign policy that had led the United States into Vietnam. The failure in Vietnam and the crisis it had engendered in foreign policy circles suggested that a sea change in policy was needed to correct the problems in foreign policy.[326] Richard Nixon was elected in large part because he promised to resolve the uncertainty. He promised to end the Vietnam War with honour. The United States would withdraw from Vietnam, but at the withdrawal would not demonstrate that the premises of the policy had been wrong. Nixon and his National Security Assistant, Henry Kissinger, faced this unenviable task. During the campaign, Nixon had mentioned a plan to end the Vietnam War. To achieve that task, Nixon

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[322] See for example, Robert M. Collins "The Economic Crisis of 1968 and the Waning of the "American Century"" American Historical Review 101 (April 1996): 396-422.

[323] See for example, Collins "The Economic Crisis of 1968" pp. 396-422; Joanne Gowa, Closing of the gold window: domestic politics and the end of Bretton Woods (Ithaca Cornell University Press 1983). See also Benjamin J. Cohen, Organizing the World's Money: the political economy of international monetary relations (London : MacMillan , 1977); Lloyd C. Gardner, Pay Any Price: Lyndon Johnson and the Wars for Vietnam, (Ivan R. Dee: Chicago, 1995) pp 410-414.; M. Stephen Weatherford, "The International Economy as a Constraint on U.S. Macroeconomic Policymaking" International Organization 42, no. 4. (Autumn, 1988): 605-637.

[324] Richard A. Melanson, American foreign policy since the Vietnam War: the search for consensus from Nixon to Clinton (Armonk N.Y.: M E Sharpe, 1996).

[325] See Henry A. Kissinger, White House Years (Little Brown and Co.: Boston, 1979), p. 56-60. See also William Safire, Before the Fall :An inside view of the pre-Watergate White House (Doubleday: New York, 1975), pp 135-142.

[326] See for example, Charles Gati, "Another Grand Debate? The Limitationist Critique of American Foreign Policy" World Politics 21, no. 1 (October 1968): 133-151.

understood that it would have to be part of a larger re-Organization of foreign policy priorities. He would have to withdraw from Vietnam but not undermine confidence in the United States other commitments. He had to create a foreign policy that would reaffirm the United States' role in the world and rally support from a public disillusioned and traumatised by the Vietnam War.

Nixon and Kissinger' freedom of action was limited. To gain the necessary freedom of action, they would have to innovate in foreign policy. The first priority was to gain more freedom of action by ending the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War. This goal had to be subsumed with in the larger political task of reconciling the changed international arena with a changed domestic situation. In the wake of the Vietnam War and Johnson's massive domestic reforms, the two realms appeared to be working against each other. The United States appeared unable to muster domestic support for an active foreign policy needed to deal with the changed international system. Yet, if the United States was to contain or restrain the international changes and keep them from harming its interests, then it had to undertake an active foreign policy. The domestic realm and the foreign policy realm had to be brought into harmony.

The first step towards this goal was a very small, but very far-reaching manoeuvre. Nixon, with the aid of his recently appointed National Security Adviser (Kissinger), carried out a bureaucratic restructuring that would concentrate foreign policy making in the White House. Nixon wanted to centralise foreign policy decision making within the White House so that he could exercise greater control to carry out his foreign policy. The bureaucratic change made Kissinger the most important, if relatively anonymous, foreign policy adviser. Some observers suggested that the bureaucratic changes made Kissinger the de facto Secretary of State.[327] However, it should be clear that Kissinger, unlike the actual Secretary of State, did not have an independent bureaucratic base of support. As an assistant to the president, Kissinger derived his bureaucratic power and status directly from Nixon. The bureaucratic and intellectual closeness of the two men makes it hard to disentangle their views. As other writers have noted, it is hard to decide where

[327] Robert McNamara with Brian VanDeMark, In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam (Vintage: New York, 1996), p. 95. See also Roger Morris Uncertain Greatness: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), p. 132-133.

Nixon stops and Kissinger starts. Kissinger, though, is quick to point out that Nixon was the main architect behind the policies.[328]

In 1969 the United States' foreign policy, in particular the Vietnam policy, appeared bankrupt.[329] Even though the United States was not on the brink of disaster, the metaphor is an important one because it presents a thematic overview to the situation Nixon and Kissinger faced. The metaphor offers an insight into Nixon and Kissinger's foreign policy philosophy. In this metaphor, they can be seen as creditors taking over a bankrupt, but highly productive enterprise that had been mismanaged. The United States had become too focused on one product line: the Vietnam War. Vietnam had distracted the business away from other production lines, like NATO, the economy, and the central military balance with the Soviet Union. At the same time the competitors in these areas had innovated and modernised. To counteract this crisis, Kissinger and Nixon had to devise a policy to sell off a wasting asset, Vietnam, and at the same time restructure the United States' other foreign policy commitments. Détente and the Nixon Doctrine were designed to reconcile the public to a continued American presence in world affairs. At the same time reassuring the "market", the international system, that the United States would meet its commitments to maintain its previously tarnished credibility.

To push the metaphor, the American public, as shareholders, had to be reassured that the new policy would reform the firm and quickly settle the outstanding problem. In other words, the American public wanted Nixon to withdraw from Vietnam, but, at the same time, achieve an

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[328] See for example, Morris, Uncertain Greatness. Other views of Kissinger's success within the Nixon White House can be seen in the following. Seymour Hersh, The Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House (New York Summit Books 1983). William Bundy, A Tangled Web; the making of foreign policy in the Nixon presidency (New York Hill and Wang 1998), p. 511 suggests that Kissinger simply executed the plans designed by Nixon. Kissinger gave extensive credit to Nixon. Examples of his can be found in White House Years, Years of Upheaval pp. 414-417 and Years of Renewal. William Safire offers an insight into the Nixon-Kissinger relationship see Before the Fall, p. 497. See also Bruce Mazlish, Kissinger: The European Mind in American Policy (New York: Basic Books, 1976), pp. 211-262.

[329] This is not to imply that all aspects of the United States foreign policy were in trouble. The United States still possessed a strong alliance system especially with NATO. What was bankrupt, or at least appeared to be to most observers, was the foreign policy philosophy. The premises that had led the United States into Vietnam were also the same premises, in large part, that justified the United States' involvement in the world. If the premises had been proven wrong in Vietnam, then the concern was that they might be wrong elsewhere. Thus, the need to reformulate and repackage the philosophical premises behind the United States' foreign policy. The change is most explicit in the geopolitical realm as the United States moves away from an unlimited globalism towards a discrete globalism. As the chapter will discuss, this solution was less than ideal.

honourable and durable peace.[330] The United States, as it withdrew, had to demonstrate to its competitors, in particular the Soviet Union, that, in spite of its troubles, it remained a healthy, productive, and determined competitor. Détente and the Nixon Doctrine were developed to complement each other.[331] Détente was a response to the changed international system and the limits of the United States' power. The Nixon Doctrine demonstrated that the United States remained committed to its allies, but it would now work in support rather than undertaking as the role of the primary actor in a regional conflict. These two strands of Nixon strategy were designed to overcome the problems that had plagued Johnson's foreign policy by giving the United States diplomatic and military freedom of action. Nixon would bring flexibility and equilibrium to United States foreign policy.

The incoming administration was alarmed by how the war dominated the administration and limited the United States' freedom of action.[332] Nixon and Kissinger believed that they had to make dramatic changes in foreign policy to reduce the inflexibility and bring foreign policy commitments in line with capabilities. Even as they envisioned these dramatic changes, they were acutely aware that dramatic changes could undermine their overall foreign policy. If the United States withdrew too rapidly from Vietnam, it might create the impression that the United States was unwilling to support its general commitments and unprepared to support other states in the region. The goal therefore was to find a measured middle ground of disengagement. This would allow them time to maintain credibility by shoring up other states and commitments, but it would be fast enough to give them increased freedom of action to deal with other foreign policy problems.

The United States needed to return Vietnam to the periphery of foreign policy if it was to overcome the domestic division that was limiting its freedom of action abroad. In particular, they worried that the domestic constraint might limit their ability to influence the central strategic

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[330] On the apparent contradictions in public opinion between withdrawal and letting the Communists win, see John E. Mueller, War, Presidents, and Public Opinion, (London: John Wiley and Sons, 1973) pp. 99-102 and p. 97.
[331] Anthony Hartley, American foreign policy in the Nixon era (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies 1975) Adelphi paper #110. On the connection between the Nixon Doctrine and Detente, see Litwak, Detente and the Nixon Doctrine, pp. 50-75.
[332] See also Kissinger, White House Years, pp. 54-70, 128-130, 192-194, 226-238. See also Richard M. Nixon, RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon, (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1978), p. 343.

balance with the Soviet Union.[333] Nixon and Kissinger had inherited a problem similar to the one facing Johnson as he contemplated increasing involvement in the Vietnam War. The United States could not sustain the previous level of involvement because it had changed and the international system changed. Johnson tried to avoid the problem by following a flawed middle path between the consequences created by withdrawal or massive escalation. Nixon and Kissinger faced a middle path between the consequences created by too slow of withdrawal or collapse. The problems that each president faced also reflected their constitutional understanding of foreign policy.

In constitutional terms, Johnson had pursued a policy of presidential prerogative in foreign policy. He relied upon his presidential prerogative to lead the United States into greater involvement in Vietnam. Johnson, in effect, followed a constitutional interpretation that understood the constitution as a unitary document where powers granted in the external realm was connected to the domestic realm.[334] He pursued an active domestic policy as he pursued an active foreign policy and he sought to expand the executive's power in both realms. In doing so, Johnson created a situation, as we saw in the previous chapter, where domestic and international policies diverged and had become unbalanced. Nixon and Kissinger faced the task of making them converge to bring them into balance. To accomplish that task, Nixon pursued a constitutional interpretation that continued and expanded Johnson's presidential prerogative in foreign policy, but at the same time pursued a more limited role in domestic policy.[335] Whereas Johnson pursued a very active domestic policy and understood foreign policy through the prism of domestic policies, Nixon pursued a very active foreign policy and understood domestic policy through the prism of foreign policy. Johnson's problem, the failure in Vietnam, an external problem was an outgrowth of his domestic policy. Nixon's problem, Watergate, an internal problem, was an outgrowth of his

[333] Ibid. p. 56 on isolation and pp. 112-162 on the relationship with the Soviet Union.
[334] Gordon Silverstein, Imbalance of Powers: constitutional interpretation and the making of American foreign policy (New York: Oxford University Press), pp. 25-30.
[335] Nixon's believed that domestic policy could be handled without much presidential involvement and was an area where the cabinet could play an important role. Foreign policy was the sole preserve of the president and required the president's attention. In this realm, the president was the dominant actor and the cabinet, when they played a role, would only play a subordinate or consultative role. See for example, Morris, Uncertain Greatness, pp. 64-67.

foreign policy.[336] These tragedies are connected by the fact that they were an outgrowth of the president's prerogative powers. The struggle over the limit to the executive's power and the balance between the different branches of government continues.[337] Even though the comparison between Nixon and Johnson is a simple and overdrawn one, it suggests how Nixon's view of the interconnection of foreign and domestic realms differed from Johnson's. In a sense, Nixon reversed Johnson's approach to the relationship between foreign and domestic policy so that he could gain more control over foreign policy.

Nixon separated the domestic and foreign arenas as a prelude to the task of bringing the two paths into balance. Johnson saw his foreign and domestic policies as being intimately connected. He saw his foreign policy as an outgrowth of his domestic policy. He believed, in large part, that he had to fight in Vietnam to save his domestic programs, the Great Society. As a result, he believed that a failure in foreign policy would have severe consequences for his domestic programs. Nixon by contrast sought to keep the two realms separate so that he could maintain a freedom of action in both.[338] Nixon needed the freedom of action to bring the foreign and domestic realms into balance. This task required a certain amount of moderation. If Nixon tried to force the two together too quickly, too fast of withdrawal or too fast of domestic reforms, he could create expectations that might develop a momentum that he could not control.[339] Nixon had to

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[336] Nixon attempted to defend the Watergate cover-up on the ground that revealing the content of the presidential tapes would threaten national security. In a general sense, Nixon invoked his foreign policy prerogative and responsibility to defend domestic acts.

[337] Silverstein, Imbalance, pp. 83-122 In contrast to Johnson, Nixon pursued a different type of imperial presidency. Johnson understood the constitution as a unitary document with a strong government both abroad and at home. We can see how Johnson's foreign policy was a direct outgrowth of his Great Society vision for domestic policy. Nixon accepted the unitary aspect in that he believed that he could use the powers developed for dealing with foreign policy in the domestic realm. However, Nixon also separated the two realms. He did this so he could focus his attention more closely on the problems of foreign policy. The problem for Nixon was that the techniques he used in foreign policy: centralisation of power and secrecy, trickled into his domestic policies and created problems.

[338] Even though Nixon used success in one realm to buttress the other, he was seeking re-election and continued support, he did not see the two realms as intimately connected as Johnson. Unlike Johnson, Nixon did not have a Great Society vision for the United States and the world.

[339] The balance of forces was a test of Nixon's statesmanship. The withdrawal had to occur fast enough to calm domestic opinion but not so fast as to create a dangerous vacuum of power in South East Asia. As Machiavelli noted, the most dangerous time for a prince is when he brings about reforms because he makes enemies of those that benefited from the old policies without yet securing the support from those who will benefit from the new policies. See Machiavelli, Prince, Ch. 6.

judge how far he could push the electorate to accept the new foreign policies and still maintain the support he developed through withdrawal from Vietnam.

In the first presidential term, Nixon and Kissinger were relatively successful in their foreign policy. They withdrew the United States from Vietnam without destabilising the region and they changed the international system by beginning diplomatic relations with China. In the first term, Nixon sketched and laid the foundation for structure of peace that he wanted to build in the international system.[340]

As Nixon entered his second term, he was still far from completing the structure. The United States faced large problems that had been created, in part, by the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War. On the domestic front, the central problem Nixon faced the problem of creating consensus to support an active foreign policy in the wake of the Vietnam failure. However, Nixon created greater difficulties for himself in this endeavour. These problems were created, in part, by the diplomatic and political methods he and Kissinger used in the first term--secrecy and centralisation of power.[341] These methods had brought some success in foreign policy, but at the price of creating mistrust and opposition at home. Nixon had undermined his attempts at building domestic support by the methods he used to gain foreign policy success. What he built could not be sustained. Nixon's international structure of peace could not be sustained because its initial foundation lacked adequate support. Nixon used his secrecy to gain the stunning success. However, by failing to include the relevant policy makers and failing to generate public support, it was difficult to develop a consensus to support the policy. In the end, domestic, not international problems undermined his foreign policy.[342]

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[340] See Richard M. Nixon, U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's: A New Strategy for Peace Report to the Congress, vol. 1, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1971) and U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's: Building for Peace Report to the Congress vol. 2, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1972) U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's: The Emerging Structure of Peace Report to Congress vol. 3, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1972) U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's: Shaping a Durable Peace Report to Congress vol. 4., (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1973)

[341] See for example William Bundy, A Tangled Web: The Making of Foreign Policy in the Nixon Presidency (New York, Hill and Wang, 1998), p. 519-520. Bundy argues that the problem was not directly caused by secrecy and centralisation, but that Nixon misrepresented his policies to the public and thereby eroded the trust necessary for a successful foreign policy.

[342] Ibid. The methods were in a word undemocratic.

There were domestic problems greater than disapproval of Nixon's foreign policy methods. These were created by the Vietnam War and worsened by Watergate: the crisis of authority and legitimacy. The United States' failure in Vietnam, a foreign policy issue, left it uncertain, confused and no longer confident of its unique role in the world. Watergate, a domestic problem, deepened the crisis of confidence and created a crisis of authority. The Vietnam War had weakened the public's belief in the government. The revelations from the Pentagon Papers put the government under close scrutiny. These political revelations reflected a strong press and the tradition of a strong democracy. To Nixon, they represented a threat. Even though Nixon was responsible for his actions it is important to remember he acted within a context. The Vietnam War and its adverse effect on how the public viewed the government created the context of Watergate.[343] Watergate created a crisis of authority in the United States. The President was now being investigated for possible illegal activities. As the crisis unfolded, Nixon's was increasingly distracted and could not devote as much attention to foreign policy as he had in the past. At this critical time, Nixon appointed Henry Kissinger to be his Secretary of State.[344] The crisis, however, would haunt his tenure. Without a strong president to lead and defend foreign policy, the Secretary of State faces a difficult task in promoting or developing new policy initiatives. Instead of extending and finishing the structure that they had created in the first term, Kissinger, as Secretary of State, spent most of his time and effort trying to preserve it. Kissinger had to expend large amounts of time and energy rallying the public's confidence in the United States' role in the world. At the same time, he had to attempt to close the rift between the legislative and executive branches over foreign policy. Finally, he had to reassure the United States' allies and send its opponents that the United States was not crippled by the crisis and could still act decisively if necessary. An example of his effort to meet these various problems was his statement at his confirmation hearings.

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[343] Kissinger in the Years of Upheaval points out how the Vietnam war created, indirectly the conditions that led to Watergate. pp. 72-127. See especially pp. 81-89. See Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Imperial Presidency (London Andre Deutsch, 1974), pp. 208-217. He argues that the problem stemmed from the centralisation of power. Kissinger saw the problem created by personalities and the political context, while Schlesinger saw it as institutional.

[344] In his book Years of Upheaval, pp. 414-449. Kissinger presents an insightful analysis of why Nixon appointed him Secretary of State. The details as well as the strategy and tactics of the appointment take us away from the chapter, but they are well worth reading for their insights into Nixon and Kissinger.

At his confirmation hearings, Kissinger spoke of the need for more openness regarding the foreign policy process and the need to institutionalise, and thereby stabilise, the bureaucratic structure.[345] At one level, he was attempting to placate a sceptical Congress. On another he was attempting to institutionalise and formalise the structure, by giving the bureaucracy a greater role, to preserve the innovative structure developed in the first term. At the same time, he sought to remind the public that the United States still had an important role in the international realm. This would serve the dual function of reassuring the allies and warning the enemies. Kissinger had to defend his foreign policy against domestic pressures and the structure of peace from international pressures. Even though all administrations face this task, Kissinger faced an uncommon problem because of the crisis of authority. He had to balance these two realms while the president's authority eroded on a daily basis. As Nixon's involvement in the day to day foreign policy operations waned, Kissinger had to rely increasingly on the foreign policy philosophy that had guided the administration during the first term.

In the first term, Nixon and Kissinger set forth the new foreign policy philosophy as the first step in reforming the United States foreign policy. As mentioned above, they faced psychological and physical problems. Nixon and Kissinger understood that they could only meet the psychological and material problems by taking the United States' foreign policy in a new direction. As John Lewis Gaddis points out, they innovated by returning to the past because Nixon and Kissinger appeared to be embracing the ideas propounded by George Kennan in 1947.[346] They may have shared the same goal of containing the Soviet Union's challenge to the United States, but Nixon and Kissinger pursued an innovative strategy to accomplish this task. Nixon's innovative strategy is perhaps best demonstrated by his decision to open diplomatic relations with China.[347]

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[345]DOSB 1 October 1973, p. 427ff. Kissinger's statement to the Senate Committee expressed his desire to control the process so that it could be routinized and thus avoid the appearance that it was "out of control" or simply in the control of the White House. See also Robert Strong, Bureaucracy and Statesmanship: Henry Kissinger and the Making of American Foreign Policy (The Credibility of Institutions, Policies and Leadership Vol. 9) Series Ed. Kenneth W. Thompson (London: University Press of America, 1986).

[346]See John Lewis Gaddis, Strategies of Containment: A critical appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy (London: Oxford University Press, 1982), p.283. See also G.R. Sloan, Geopolitics in United States Strategic Policy 1890-1987 (Brighton: Wheatsheaf, 1988), p. 170.

[347] While Nixon was not the only one thinking along these lines, he had the courage and the opportunity to carry out the strategy.

The move toward China signalled a fundamental change from Johnson's foreign policy and from the post-World War Two framework of United States foreign policy. In a word, Nixon had reduced the rigid ideological pursuit of anti-communism within United States foreign policy. The ideological anti-communism had supported Johnson's foreign policy of globalism, and Nixon and Kissinger believed that it had made the United States' foreign policy inflexible. If the United States were to manage the changes in the international system and develop a new structure of peace to meet the emerging power of the Soviet Union, then it would require diplomatic flexibility. Nixon expressed a new foreign policy philosophy, with the help of Kissinger, in his annual foreign policy statements. The philosophy would stress a pragmatic approach to foreign policy. Through an emphasis on power and realpolitik, the philosophy was designed to avoid the foreign policy excesses that had developed during the Johnson administration. Reducing the ideological excesses of the Johnson administration would give Nixon and Kissinger the necessary diplomatic flexibility. In this regard, Nixon was correct to argue that the United States had to change, reduce its ideological fervour, because "the postwar period in international relations has ended."[348] The changes in the United States' foreign policy and within the international system became the justification for Nixon and Kissinger's attempt to build a stable structure of peace. Although the Vietnam War may have weakened the United States, it could reap the benefits from the diplomatic freedom of action created by withdrawal.[349]

Kissinger, as Secretary of State, presented a foreign policy philosophy that focused on the awareness of the limits of power. It was based upon an understanding of the international system that reflected the lessons of realpolitik. The power capabilities and the limits to those capabilities would be a central to understanding how the system operated and how it could be managed. Kissinger understood that the United States ability to shape the world was limited both

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[348] Nixon A new strategy for Peace, p. 4.

[349] Gaddis, Strategies, p. 277, makes the point that Kissinger wanted to give foreign policy a "philosophical deepening, but the change suggested in this thesis goes beyond "philosophical deepening" to a wholesale change in the underlying foreign policy philosophy. See for example the Second State of the World Address where Kissinger makes the claim for a change in philosophy. See also Kissinger White House Years p. 159. See also Kissinger's testimony to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on 1 October 1973 where he makes this claim explicitly. "This means an open articulation of our philosophy, our purposes, and our actions We have sought to do this in the President's annual reports to the Congress on foreign policy." DOSB 1 October 1973, p. 427.

domestically and internationally. An example of the domestic problem was that the foreign policy support was tenuous and this limited his freedom of action. Externally, the diffusion of power and the emergence of the Soviet Union as a global super power limited his freedom of action. Kissinger, as Secretary of State, represented a United States and faced a world that differed dramatically from Dean Rusk's experience. Yet, for all the differences, there was an essential continuity to them. To understand the change from Johnson and Rusk to Nixon and Kissinger, it is necessary to explore Kissinger's foreign policy philosophy.

The following sections explore Henry Kissinger's philosophy of foreign policy with the same questions used to explore Dean Rusk's philosophy of foreign policy. The first question is: What was Henry Kissinger's view of the world? To break the question down into its component parts and treat them more specifically, we will ask four sub-questions. First, what was Kissinger's understanding of the international arena? Did he understand the international system to be based on conflict or on Co-Operation? Second, what goals did Kissinger believe that his vision of the world order should achieve? In other words, what did Henry Kissinger seek to accomplish or see achieved in the international arena? For example, did Kissinger see the goals of the international system as stability, freedom, or justice? Third, what methods were necessary to achieve the goals of the world order? Broadly speaking, what were the mechanisms or organizations needed? Fourth, what were the main threats to achieving and maintaining the goals of the world order vision? For example, did Kissinger fear that instability in the periphery would lead to a superpower confrontation at the centre of the international system?

Section One. What was Henry Kissinger's view of the world?

What was Henry Kissinger's understanding of the international arena? Henry Kissinger believed that the international system was undergoing a period of dramatic and fundamental change. The most important strategic change was that the Soviet Union had emerged as superpower and a global rival to the United States. The international realm continued to change as decolonization, begun in the early 1960s, continued to add new states to the international system. In the economic realm, the changes were as dramatic as the changes in the central bipolar military balance between the Soviet Union and the United States. The United States' economy was in disarray as it tried

with little apparent success to restrain the inflation that had developed during the late 1960s. Internationally, the economic situation was not much better. The world was buffeted by a series of economic crises in primary resources. The food and petroleum crises were quite severe. Their severity and their effect on the world economy, especially the economies of Western Europe, Japan, and the United States, demonstrated the dependence of the industrial western democracies on natural resources, especially petroleum. The international system had changed dramatically while the United States was increasing its involvement in the Vietnam War. If the United States was to adapt successfully to these changes, it would have to reconsider its foreign policy.

The United States had to chart a new path if it was to maintain its economic and political position during this turbulent period. Kissinger believed that the word was on the brink of something new. The question was whether the world would fall into chaos or if it would ascend into an era of Co-Operation or community.[350] The key problem as well as the first theme in Kissinger's worldview was **change.** The crucial concern was to develop a response that would restrain disorder and encourage order in the international system. Change as a threat and as an opportunity because it offered the opportunity to develop a new structure of peace that would reflect the changes but also restrain potential forces of disorder.[351] Kissinger relied on his study of history to understand how a new structure of peace could be developed. The test of a statesman, according to Kissinger, was his ability to recognise the potentialities of a situation and use them to accomplish his goals.[352] Nixon and Kissinger sought to design a structure that would help the United States to overcome the potentially debilitating effects from the changes in the international system. In particular, they were concerned with managing the Soviet Union's emergence as a superpower. Their concern was that the Soviet Union acts as a revolutionary state by trying to use its power to change the international system. A new international system was needed to meet this

[350]As Kissinger put it; "The world stands uneasily posed between unprecedented chaos and the opportunity for unparalleled creativity. The next few years will determine whether interdependence will foster common progress or common disaster." DOSB 17 February 1975, p. 197.
[351]DOSB 1 October 1973, p. 426.
[352] See Henry A. Kissinger, A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the problems of peace, 1812-22 (Boston (Mass.) : Houghton Mifflin, 1957), p.325.

challenge and the changes within the United States.[353] The United States was facing a watershed in its foreign policy because it could no longer sustain the previous policies of containment.

Kissinger returned to the theme that the United States was at a watershed in its history. In looking at the more than sixty speeches he gave as Secretary of State, one see that one of the major themes is that the United States is at a **watershed** in its history.[354][355] The United States, bloodied by Vietnam, faced a decision over the future of its foreign policy and in a larger sense over its identity. It could turn inward and reduce its foreign policy activity or it could continue an active, although, limited world role, but it could not continue the attempt to have an expansive globalist foreign policy. In the past, the United States had justified its world role in part by referring to its exceptionalism. That identity was under scrutiny as the public tried to reconcile the ambiguity of the Vietnam War with the belief in exceptionalism. If the United States was to continue its world role, it would have to accept that its power to act in the world was limited. This awareness had to accompany a reassessment of the claim to exceptionalism. However, Kissinger understood that neither a concern over the limits of power nor the moral mission of the United States could be accepted as an excuse to avoid acting in the international arena. To refuse to act would be worse than only acting for limited goals.

The **limits of power** were another major theme within Kissinger's worldview. To take advantage of the watershed, the United States had to reassess its international role. Kissinger believed that a stable world order based upon the awareness of the limits of power could be developed. Such an order would require self-restraint by all the major powers. If the United States and other states recognised the limits to their power, then they would refrain from trying to alter the international status quo. The restraint would be in part self-restraint, an awareness of one's own limit, but it would also be external restraint, an awareness that the state's power to change the

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[353] See Raymond Aron, The Imperial Republic: The United States and the World 1945-1973, Trans Frank Jellinek (Prentice Hall: New Jersey, 1974) p. 114. "With the urgent task of finishing with Vietnam there combined another long term and ill defined task, that of restraining an international system in which the United States would not reign supreme and which, without ruling out a clash of interests or even disputes, would constitute, if not a balance comparable to that of the Concert of Europe, at least relations of a traditional kind between all powers, including the revolutionary powers."

[354] For a full discussion of Kissinger's philosophy of history see Peter Dickson, Kissinger and the Meaning of History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

[355] Ibid. p. 84.

system was limited by the other states in the system. Stability would develop from self-restraint. Kissinger believed that stability in the system based upon equilibrium of power or the self restraint of power would last longer than one imposed by one state or states on the system. Moreover, if states were constantly vying for power, unaware of the limits of power, then instability would follow. A key problem though was that states did not always recognise the limits to their power and thus conflict was still a constant problem.

The international system had been changing and that change was often the result of **conflict**. Harmony or Co-Operation was an exception because the world was divided into rival ideological and power blocs. The central conflict and instability in the system stemmed from the ideological stance of the great powers and therefore could not be transcended by one power alone. Order could not be imposed by one power, a Leviathan, imposing its will on the other states. No state was powerful enough nor possessed sufficient national will to achieve such a goal. Even the United States had failed to defend and expand the liberal world order in South Vietnam. As the conflict was based on ideology as competing claims of how to order the world politically, an international order would have to transcend ideology. Kissinger tried to solve this problem by refounding the international system and the central United States-Soviet Union relationship upon the neutral concepts of power and self-interest. The structure's primary goal was to dampen the conflict between these states and their respective ideologies. Stability would then allow the states to reap other benefits thwarted or stunted by the continuing conflict. Kissinger stated eloquently the benefits of stability in his first address as Secretary of State:

> As the world grows more stable, we must confront the question of the ends of détente. As the threat of war recedes, the problem of the quality of life takes on more urgent significance.[356]

[356]DOSB 15 October 1973, p. 471 While Dickson makes much of the fact that Kissinger's first and penultimate official addresses as Secretary of State were at the UN and contained explicit Kantian themes, I do not share his analysis. One should note that Kissinger posited these ideals, but they were secondary to the initial and continuing question of power. Moreover, the question of power, as see by Kissinger, would never give a step towards the Kantian second order questions. In other words, the power balance between the power blocs could only live in a stable peace, but nothing could be built on that basis because the world was divided on that basis. To put it directly, Kissinger's power structure gave the world stability in which the powers confronted each other rather than trying to live according to an agreed standard like the rule of law. In Kissinger's structure states could only live on the continually tenuous power balance not an agreed upon stable standard enforced by that power.

In other words, stability would allow second order issues, like quality of life and justice to emerge. Nixon and Kissinger sought, the first term, to create and maintain a structure that would bring stability to the international system. However, in the second term, Kissinger faced the problems and flaws within that system as he attempted to defend it and maintain it.

One flaw was basing the system on power. By basing the structure on power, Nixon and Kissinger only changed the level on which the conflict occurred. The conflict moved from an abstract, although potentially absolute, level of ideology, to a more practical, and therefore limited, level of power. Although Kissinger might argue that the new level was easier to manage because it was limited, it did not remove the underlying conflict. By moving to the level of power, Kissinger was revealing the implicit foundations of the conflict: the geopolitical positions of the central antagonists.

Geopolitics and the geopolitical relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union were another important theme in Kissinger's world view.[357] If the international system was to be made stable, an equilibrium between the central powers had to exist. Equilibrium could only be achieved by taking into account the geopolitical position of the major powers. Kissinger and Nixon, unlike the previous administration, were quite explicit in their geopolitical interests.[358] Nixon and Kissinger's geopolitical goal was to create stability in the international system based upon an awareness of power. They did not focus their energies on developing a system based upon the rule of law. The key to this stability was the central relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union, but Kissinger understood that the relationship extended to all parts of the globe.[359] With stability and equilibrium as policy goals, the United States would intervene against threats to the balance of power rather than ideological threats.[360] Nixon and Kissinger were pursuing a discriminate globalism in their foreign policy in contrast to Johnson and Rusk's

[357] See Kissinger, White House Years, p. 65 for more on this theme.
[358] Sloan, Geopolitics, p. 166-167.
[359] Hartley, American Foreign Policy, p. 15 "From 1969 onwards the achievement by the Soviet Union of a degree of nuclear parity with the United States and strategic mobility for her armed forces (principally by the expansion of her Navy and her airlift capability) had increased her capacity for military intervention at the same time as American public opinion was acting as a brake on any similar action by the United States."
[360] Gaddis, Strategies, p.284-285. By downplaying ideology, Nixon and Kissinger viewed threats to their interests in a different manner, but they still faced the problems of globalism, albeit in a different form.

apparent pursuit of an indiscriminate globalism.[361] They believed that Johnson had created an unnecessary set of self-imposed ideological constraints. Kissinger argued that ideology had made Johnson's foreign policy inflexible. Flexibility could only be returned to foreign policy by reducing the role of ideology.[362] However, as we will discuss in the section on the threats to the world order, Kissinger appeared to exchange one form of globalism, ideological, for another, power. He achieved a form of flexibility through ideological ambiguity, but Kissinger still faced the problem of upholding a global foreign policy. Kissinger, like Rusk, faced the task of distinguishing between core and peripheral threats. He had apparently changed the measure from ideology to power with the belief that he could have more flexibility and greater clarity with power.[363]

Kissinger found the task of measuring power and identifying core or peripheral threats were made difficult by the increased role of economic factors. Economic issues had emerged, somewhat unexpectedly, as important national security concern. The general geopolitical view can be divided into two distinct levels, military and economic. In terms of military power, the world was bipolar. The United States and the Soviet Union were the only military superpowers. However, the economic crises, Japan and Germany's emergence as economic powers, had changed the international system while the United States was bogged down in Vietnam. New centres of power had begun to emerge. Germany and Japan had developed economically and China had emerged as a geopolitically important state. The geopolitical and economic developments, especially the petroleum and food crises, had an effect on the central bipolar relationship. The world was becoming **economically multipolar**. The Soviet Union and United States were the only military super powers, but the forms of international power were changing. The increased importance of economic factors as a form of power meant that other states were beginning to emerge as important actors in the international system. Nixon and Kissinger recognised this change and tried to develop policies to respond to the changing economic situation. At one point, Nixon suggested that the world had become multipolar.[364] Nixon may have been premature in

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361 Sloan, Geopolitics, chapters 5 and 6 for more on the difference between these two eras.
362 Kissinger, Diplomacy, p. 676.
363 Sloan, Geopolitics, p. 178.
364 See DOSB 26 July 1971, p. 96. See also Osgood, Retreat From Empire, pp. 1-22.

suggesting the world now had five major centres of power, but he was correct to suggest those political consequences of the economic developments. The United States faced a world where power had become diffused. The diffusion of power was making the world more complicated for policy makers.[365]

Political and economic **interdependence** is another theme in Kissinger's world view. The two economic crises, food and petroleum, in the early 1970s, demonstrated to Kissinger that the world had become increasingly interdependent. The petroleum crisis, in particular, demonstrated the strategic consequences of economic interdependence. During the latter part of his term as Secretary of State, Kissinger stressed that interdependence demonstrated the increased complexity of the international system. The strategic consequences created by economic interdependence and dependence had become more pronounced. While all statesmen deal with a complex system and interdependence to some degree, statesmen in the early 1970s confronted the added problem of economic interdependence. The petroleum crisis shocked the Western democracies because it exposed their vulnerability and the dependency on inexpensive petroleum. For the United States, and Kissinger, in particular the petroleum crisis threatened to distort the global power balance by the dramatic shifts in economic resources. The central balance was threatened because it suggested that the United States might be vulnerable. A further problem was its consequences on regions that were now more strategically important than ever before. The Middle East states became extremely wealthy very quickly. This sudden change contributed greatly to the region's instability. The global and regional changes forced Kissinger to spend much of his time dealing with the political and strategic consequences.[366] The economic crises also suggested that diplomacy was not simply "high politics" between the great powers, but now had to take into account "low politics" relating to economics and resources.

Kissinger did not believe that he could solve the problems created by the changes in the international system, but he did believe that he could develop a policy to manage the problems. Short term improvements could be used dampen or eliminate the worst excesses, but a long term

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[365] See Walt W. Rostow, The Diffusion of Power: an essay in recent history (New York: Macmillan, 1972).
[366] See Seyom Brown, The Crises of Power : an interpretation of United States foreign policy during the Kissinger years (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979).

policy to manage the problems had to address the structure of the international system. The goal was to create an international structure that would control the forces of change. The structure would not eliminate them, but it would offer a benchmark or a mechanism for managing the problems rather than relying on an ad hoc arrangement. Kissinger focused on structure because he believed that the problems in the international system were structural. Kissinger understanding of the international structure was influenced by his work on Castlereagh, Metternich and Bismarck. In the essay "The White Revolutionary: Reflections on Bismarck" Kissinger explored how Bismarck manipulated the revolutionary elements in the European state system to achieve his policy goals.[367] Even though Bismarck was concerned with the European State system, Kissinger understood that the same techniques could be applied to the international system. Kissinger like Bismarck was interested in turning power into self-restraint and achieving stability by restraining "contending forces. By manipulating their competing antagonisms".[368] Kissinger sought to develop an international system that could include states that had previously tried to change the international system. These revolutionary states had to be included because Kissinger believed that by including them in the system this would encourage them to support the system. The system could only work if an equilibrium of power existed to restrain attempts to change the system through force. A concept of legitimacy, which could be accepted by all states was also necessary to define behaviour that was destabilising.

Kissinger understood the international system to experiencing structural change. The most dramatic political change was the Soviet Union's emergence as a superpower. The economic changes, especially the petroleum crisis, were adding to the political changes. Kissinger believed that the system teetered on the brink of revolution and disorder. He understood that solving the problem of disorder was difficult because the system was divided ideologically between the United States and the Soviet Union. Any successful attempt to manage the problem would require a structure that would transcend or reduce the ideological divide. Kissinger and Nixon set out to develop such a structure, but their task was made difficult by the changes in the system and the United States. The international system was on the brink of disorder because the United States was

[367]See Henry A. Kissinger, "The White Revolutionary: Reflections on Bismarck", Daedulus. 97 (Summer 1968): 888- 937.
[368] Ibid. p.890 on self-restraint and p. 888 for manipulating contending forces.

weakened by the economic and political crisis at a time when the Soviet Union was becoming more powerful. If such changes were to be managed and conflict was to be avoided, then stability had to be brought to the international system.

Second, *what were the goals that Kissinger believed his world order should achieve?* Stability was a goal for the international system. Kissinger, in his writings and speeches argued that a stable system rested upon a common concept of legitimacy and an equilibrium of power.[369] From the primary goal of stability; secondary goals, like peace and even justice, could develop. A shared concept of legitimacy would help to restrain states seeking to change the system. The concept of legitimacy would reward behaviour that stabilised the system. By giving states a minimum stake in the system, that would go a long way towards changing from a revolutionary state to a status quo state. A key question though would be what would be the minimum entrance requirement. For Kissinger, this would be supporting stability. To reinforce this stability, an equilibrium of power would be needed. This would help to restrain the attempts to change the system by force. The principle of legitimacy would be the basis for negotiating change, rather than a resort to force. It did not rule out the use of force, but it helped to channel it, by directing it to support stability rather than oppose it. Thus, **stability**, a goal for the international system, would be based upon shared understanding of **order** and **legitimacy**.[370]

Order in the system would extend from the central United States-Soviet Union relationship to the whole system. The centre and periphery would be connected in this system. An overriding goal was to contain regional conflicts to keep them from spiralling into a conflict at the system's centre. According to Kissinger's argument, stability in the centre would encourage stability in the periphery because states in the centre, which benefited from stability, would work to reduce instability in the periphery. If stability was to be maintained, the system had to avoid or dampen extreme clashes of interest that might lead to instability in the centre. Nuclear war or the

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[369] See for example DOSB 12 April 1976, p. 483 "We must recognize that no world order will be stable over the last quarter of this century unless all its participants consider that they have a stake in it and it is legitimate and just" See also DOSB 15 October 1973, pp. 469-470 and DOSB 29 October 1973, pp. 527-530.

[370] See Henry A. Kissinger, "Central Issues in American foreign policy" in Kermit Gordon ed. Agenda for the Nation (Washington D.C. Brookings Institution, 1968), p. 588.

threat of a nuclear war would be an example of an extreme threat at the centre. If this was avoided and contained, it would create stability at the centre that could form the basis for dealing with instability in the lesser regional conflicts.[371] The stability at the centre would be based upon an equilibrium of power. The central powers would not come together from shared interests, but from self-interest and self-restraint born of the awareness of the other state's power.[372] The equilibrium of power would help to foster stability because each state would recognise the limits of its power to change the system and the constraints created by the power of other states. However, self-restraint and would only lead to stability if it was embedded within a shared concept of legitimacy.

Legitimacy was limited to the state's external behaviour. States would be accepted without regard to their internal Organization of the state. Kissinger sought to separate domestic politics, where domestic legitimacy is determined and international politics, where a state's behaviour matters.[373] Legitimacy was important for states such as the Soviet Union and China, where domestic political behaviour was often criticised by other states and they wanted the international system to legitimate their political standing.[374] Kissinger sought to modify the external behaviour of states and legitimacy was not considered a moral standard to judge a regime's behaviour to its own citizens. Interestingly, the separation of domestic and international behaviour reflected, in a different context, the separation of domestic and foreign policy that Nixon pursued inside his administration.[375] Although the method of separating foreign and domestic politics was applied to different mediums, international legitimacy was a device to develop a basis for states to coexist, not as a device for understanding constitutional issues.[376] Kissinger believed that legitimacy would encourage states that were sensitive to criticism over their domestic political structure a stake in the international system because the international legitimacy only focused on

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[371] Brown, Crises of Power, p. 12.

[372]See Kenneth W. Thompson, Traditions and Values in Politics and Diplomacy: Theory and Practice (London: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), p. 289. "Peace in Nixon's view can never be based on mutual friendship. Its sole foundation must be "mutual respect for each other's strength"."

[373]On the separation of domestic and international spheres, see John D. Montgomery, "The Education of Henry Kissinger" Journal of International Affairs 29, (1975): 51.

[374] A case in point is the Helsinki Accords that the Soviet Union signed. The Soviet Union promoted these negotiations and signed the accords because they legitimised the territorial borders of the Soviet Union. See Bundy, A Tangled Web, pp. 480-484.

[375] Silverstein, Imbalance, pp. 89-100.

[376] See Bell, Diplomacy, p.32. See also Kissinger, A World Restored, p.1.

their external behaviour. If the international system did not condemn or threaten their existence, then they would be less likely to resort to force to manage adjustments to the system. The major states would maintain the system by their self-restraint because it was in their self-interest.[377] An equilibrium would develop once states realised the limits of their powers to change the international system and they realised that the system would not seek to change their domestic structure.[378] Survival was the fundamental issue of self-interest for all of these states. It took precedence over any moral authority because even if one was right and a general war broke out, then the justness of the cause would be meaningless. In other words, one could be right, but dead. Kissinger understood that as a statesman his first responsibility was to guard the survival of the state, not saving the souls of other states.

Stability in the international system was the main goal, but it was not the only goal. A key ambiguity within Kissinger's world view was whether or not peace was possible. For if peace was the primary goal, then the system would be at the mercy of the most ruthless power. Kissinger eloquently summarised the problem of peace and its reliance on stability and self-restraint.

> A world in which the survival of nations is at the mercy of the few would spell oppression and injustice and fear. There can be no security without equilibrium and no safety without restraint.[379]

By making stability the primary and peace a secondary goal, Kissinger tried to avoid the problem. Peace could not develop without stability. Stability would not lead to peace without a shared concept of legitimacy to keep conflict from arising over changes in the international system.

After stability and peace, the third goal was **prosperity.** Economic issues appeared to demand as much of Kissinger's attention as did strategic and military issues. As a result of the petroleum crisis and the closing of the "gold window", Kissinger spent much of his term as Secretary of States focusing on economic issues. The oil, food, and monetary crises contributed to the uncertainty and disorder within the international system. For example, the United States

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377 Bell, Diplomacy, p. 31.

378 A central ambiguity in Kissinger's approach was when a state was acting legitimately or illegitimately in the international system. How did one determine a minor disturbance with the precursor to a large scale attempt to revise the system. See Litwak, Detente and the Nixon Doctrine, pp. 60-61. A similar problem faced Kissinger's understanding of the geopolitical balance in that one had to have a global presence to respond to any changes in the regional balance of power that might signal a shift in the central balance of power. See for example Sloan, Geopolitics, Chapter 6.

379 DOSB 13 October 1975, p. 546.

created a new period of uncertainty when it closed the "gold window" to end a period of economic created by the problems associated with the Vietnam War.[380] The crisis reflected in large part the problems of economic interdependence and Kissinger had to develop an effective strategy to meet these problems. Unfortunately, Kissinger did not have a strong grasp of economics. He implemented a variety of strategies to manage the problem, but these were limited because they tended to reflect his political outlook rather than an economic outlook. In the oil crisis, for example, Kissinger employed a variety of strategies. First he advocated Co-Operation and concerted action among the consumer nations. Second, he suggested opening a dialogue between the North and South to address the related political issues. Third, he hinted at the possible use of force to solve the problem.[381] Kissinger warned that if the petroleum crisis threatened the survival of the West and was not amenable to a negotiated settlement, the western industrial democracies might have to rely upon military force. The strategies reflect Kissinger's understanding of international politics rather than international economics because they were only short term solutions. As a result, he only had a small role in the formulation of the long term economic solutions suggested by his economic advisers. Critics suggested that Kissinger never created a structure suitable for dealing with the long term implications of the various resource crises.[382]

Kissinger had a fourth goal that included the three main goals of stability, peace, and prosperity. The **fourth goal** was to develop the basis for a **world community**. In his first address to the UN, Kissinger stated that if a lasting peace was to be developed, the world must move beyond détente to Co-Operation and beyond coexistence to community. Co-Operation and community would enable the world to develop a just consensus where the "aspiration for dignity and equal opportunity" could be fulfilled.[383] While these goals may appear utopian or simply idealistic, they offered a goal beyond stability and coexistence with which to motivate foreign policy. However, Kissinger, ever the realist, understood that peace, prosperity, justice, and even security, would be meaningless unless there was a bedrock of stability based upon an equilibrium

[380] Collins "The Economic Crisis of 1968" pp. 396-422; Gowa, Closing of the gold window, and Weatherford "The International Economy," pp. 605-637.
[381]On the "threat to use force" see DOSB 27 January 1975, p. 101 The quotation came in an interview with *Businessweek* Magazine published on 13 January 1975.
[382] See Mazlish, Kissinger, pp. 257-261. See also Bundy, A Tangled Web, pp. 452-460.
[383]On the move from détente to Co-Operation see DOSB 15 October 1973, p. 470. On the aspiration for dignity and equal opportunity, see DOSB 13 October 1975, p. 552.

of power. Kissinger expressed the overarching goals of his world, but those goals were never achieved. In the next sub-section, we examine Kissinger's methods for developing and maintaining the world order he envisioned.

Third, How to achieve the goals of Kissinger's world order?

Nixon and Kissinger restructured the United States' foreign policy by implementing a new foreign policy philosophy--the Nixon Strategy.[384] Nixon developed and Kissinger implemented the strategy, which combined the Nixon Doctrine and the policy of détente. Neither the Nixon Doctrine nor the strategy can be understood without including the policy of détente.[385] The strategy represented the quintessential duality of Richard Nixon: competition and Co-Operation would exist and be employed simultaneously.[386] The Nixon Doctrine focused on the competitive issues: the military balance. The United States, in the aftermath of Vietnam and with the emergence of the Soviet Union as a global power, had to reorganise and replenish its military capability. The doctrine had signalled that the United States was reassessing its commitments in order to bring them in line with its capabilities.[387] Co-Operation, the other half of the duality, was represented by the strategy of détente. In this area foreign policy issues, narrowly understood, took precedent over defence issues because détente focused on reducing tensions with the Soviet Union through negotiations. However, the negotiations and détente could only succeed to the extent that they were supported by military capability.

Kissinger, in following the Nixon strategy, relied on **negotiations** as a key method to advance his world order vision. Kissinger wanted to avoid any hint of appeasement, but he understood that he had to negotiate with the Soviet Union if he was to reduce tensions and thereby create the stability necessary for peace. An increasingly powerful Soviet Union was considered the main threat to the stability of the international system. Kissinger, and Nixon, understood that stability could not be achieved solely on the basis of either confrontation or negotiations. The United States, weakened by the Vietnam War, and the international system could not sustain

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[384] Put in Osgood citation on this point.
[385]On the connection between the Nixon Doctrine and Detente, I follow the analysis of Litwak Detente and the Nixon Doctrine, pp. 50-75.
[386]See Thompson, Diplomacy and Values, p284.
[387] Earl C. Ravenal, Large Scale Foreign Policy Change: The Nixon Doctrine as history and portent, (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1989).

confrontation because it offered no chance for long term stability. Negotiations alone would simply encourage the Soviet Union to remain intransigent and rely upon its growing power to wrest more concessions. The only choice remaining between these broad extremes was a policy that combined them. If the United States was to restrain the Soviet Union without destabilising the international system by conflict or concessions, then it would have to negotiate even as it competed. Negotiations would help to reduce tensions within the system by giving the United States and the Soviet Union a method short of conflict to manage changes in and threats to the international stability. However, negotiations could never replace military strength. Kissinger understood that negotiations would fail if they were not backed up with the military strength necessary to enforce them. Kissinger noted the military necessity in his book, Diplomacy, by pointing out that Nixon's foreign policy relied upon stability that developed from the underlying balance of power.[388]

Negotiations and equilibrium of power would create **self-restraint** in the great powers. Power would be the basis and the reason for self-restraint and negotiations would express that self-restraint. To put it differently, Kissinger pursued a policy of strategic moderation. Kissinger relied upon an overall theme of moderation for his methods. Even though some of his methods may have appeared immoderate, they were ordered within a structure that was designed to obtain the moderate goal of stability. In contrast to the previous administration's liberal internationalism, Kissinger strove to develop a policy and an outlook that reflected a conservative moderation.[389] Moderation would help set the tone for encouraging stability, but it could only develop within an international system that would reward moderate behaviour and punish immoderate behaviour.

The Nixon Strategy was designed to develop a moderate international system that would create stability. By alternating Co-Operation and competition, Nixon and Kissinger sought to develop a mechanism for encouraging moderate, stabilising, behaviour and punishing immoderate, destabilising, behaviour. The strategy was to bring the Soviet Union into such a system and to

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[388] See Henry A. Kissinger Diplomacy (New York: Simon Schuster, 1994), p. 705.

[389] Finding a moderate middle path that can weave together both the aggressive and the peaceful elements within a society, is the task of a statesman according to Plato. See Plato, The Statesman, trans. J. B. Skemp (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952) 306a-311c. See also Stanley Rosen, Plato's Statesman: The Web of Politics, (London: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 179-190 and Joseph Cropsey, Plato's World: Man's place in the Cosmos, (London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 141-144.

security, would be meaningless unless there was a bedrock of stability based upon an equilibrium of power. Kissinger expressed the overarching goals of his world, but those goals were never achieved. In the next sub-section, we examine Kissinger's methods for developing and maintaining the world order he envisioned.

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develop a mechanism for encouraging moderate, stabilising, behaviour and punishing immoderate, destabilising, behaviour. The strategy was to bring the Soviet Union into such a system and to restrain its ability or willingness to seek to destabilise the international system. The system was not designed to give the Soviet Union full concessions, but to make it aware that it was in its interest to cooperage. On the geopolitical level, Nixon created a point of leverage and thereby a reason for the Soviet Union's Co-Operation by opening diplomatic relations with China. Coral Bell pointed out that the strategy of détente, within the tripolar balance of power, was based upon mutual self-interest.[390] Each party involved would gain from the reduced tensions even though the underlying ideological conflict was not removed. Kissinger understood that the Soviet Union might agree to reduce tensions, but that did not mean it had changed. If détente was measured solely by changes in the Soviet Union, then it would not succeed.[391] Kissinger relied upon détente to change their external behaviour not to change their internal political structure. Its tactical behaviour might change, but the underlying strategic behaviour, based upon the balance of power and ideology, had not changed. Kissinger sought to create temporary changes because he believed that if they endured, they would become permanent changes. The goal of détente was to modify the Soviet Union's external behaviour to reduce international tensions.

The importance of negotiations and the awareness of limits was demonstrated by the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT). An analysis of the SALT negotiations is beyond the scope of the chapter. These negotiations fit within Nixon and Kissinger's strategy because SALT suggested that negotiations, backed by military capability, can succeed without either side "winning." According to Nixon and Kissinger, negotiating the limits to the number of strategic nuclear weapons helped to create stability because the Soviet Union and the United States avoided a costly arms build-up. However, the negotiations only masked the awareness that each side could default. Defaulting was discouraged for several reasons. First, each side gained from the agreements. Second, and perhaps most importantly, both states were aware that their efforts could be matched by the other side. Third, the results in SALT were linked to other areas of progress in

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[390]See Coral Bell, The Diplomacy of Detente: The Kissinger Era (London: Martin Robertson, 1977).
[391]See DOSB 14 October 1974. See also Gaddis, Strategies, pp 282-283.

the US-USSR relationship. Fourth, the talks were believed to be a way to contain the potentially destabilising effects from technological innovations within weapons systems.

Direct negotiations were not the only way to achieve détente. Another way to achieve was to link a state's behaviour in one region or on one issue with behaviour in another region or on another issue. The idea of **linkage** was important in building the structure that would modify the Soviet Union's behaviour. Linkage followed from Nixon's strategy of Co-Operation and competition. The thinking behind linkage was that the Soviet Union's behaviour in one area, SALT for example, would be linked to another area, for example grain sales. The linkage would allow Nixon to apply indirect pressure in one area to affect behaviour in another. The goal was to modify the Soviet Union's international behaviour according to the concept of legitimacy. If the Soviet Union undertook destabilising acts, they would incur costs while stabilising behaviour would incur benefits. Linking behaviour across different issues would allow détente to demonstrate a cumulative effect rather than a narrow issue specific effect.

Neither détente nor linkage was an end in itself, but each was part of the process to create stability and the ultimate goal of Co-Operation. Détente was and remains highly controversial. Critics argued that it was misguided and amoral while supporters argue that it was never given enough time to succeed.[392] To explore fully that strategy or its implications for American foreign policy are beyond the scope of this thesis. Détente offers an insight into Kissinger's world view.[393] Kissinger hoped to reduce tensions and create stability. From stability he believed he could develop Co-Operation. In doing so, he believed that tactical adjustments, if maintained would become permanent.

> For whether the change is temporary and tactical, or lasting and basic, our task is essentially the same: To transform that change into a permanent condition devoted to the purpose of a secure peace and mankind's aspiration for a better life. A tactical change sufficiently prolonged becomes a lasting transformation.[394]

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[392]For critics see for example, G. Warren Nutter, Kissinger's Grand Design (Washington D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1975), pp. 15-25. See also Raymond Garthoff, Detente and Confrontation : American-Soviet relations from Nixon to Reagan,. (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1994) See Kissinger's three volumes of memoirs for a defense.

[393]For a fuller treatment of détente, Gartoff's Detente and Confrontation is recommended.

[394]DOSB 14 October 1974, p. 516.

The last point, perhaps, encapsulates the philosophy behind détente. It also tells us something about Kissinger foreign policy philosophy. A central problem of identifying whether a temporary change will become a long term transformation. The hope expressed in the statement appears to clash with Kissinger's writings on statesmanship. In his book A World Restored, Kissinger that a statesman can only temporarily transcend the public's experience. Thus a statesman can only temporarily or for short periods outrun the limits with his vision before he must fall back into the experiences of his public.[395] If that is the case, how can we make a temporary change, a temporary transcendence of limits, into a permanent change? Does it suggest that on can become deluded by temporary changes and confuse them for permanent changes? Critics might suggest that Kissinger confused a temporary fluctuation in power between the United States and the Soviet Union for a permanent shift.[396]

If Kissinger and Nixon confused a temporary shift for a permanent change, they can be excused because the international situation suggested that a permanent shift was occurring. At the time, the United States was weakened materially and psychologically by Vietnam and the Soviet Union appeared to be growing stronger.[397] However, one has to ask whether Nixon and, in particular, Kissinger overestimated the changes and underestimated the United States' material and psychological resources? One could suggest that Kissinger failed to develop a lasting international structure because he built it upon the wrong premises. The structure reflected an extreme view, in the same way that Rusk pursued an extreme view, of the United States. Even though Kissinger referred to the need for moderation, it would appear that he was immoderate in his moderation. In other words, he took moderation to far and misjudged its underlying basis. As J.G.A. Pocock suggested, Kissinger appeared to be playing for time because he was aware that a

[395] See Kissinger, A World Restored, p. 329.
[396] See for example Richard C. Thornton, The Nixon-Kissinger Years : Reshaping of America's Foreign Policy (New York: Paragon House, 1989).
[397] Bundy, in A Tangled Web, makes this argument for the wrong reasons. He is correct to point out that Nixon did not build a lasting structure, but he makes the point in contrast with Truman. The argument is effective, but the comparison is deeply unfair. Truman led a powerful country that was united in support behind an internationalist outlook. Truman enjoyed a psychological and material preponderance of power. Nixon inherited a nearly bankrupt economy, a psychologically split country. On that alone, the comparison is unfair. See Bundy, A Tangled Web, pp. 517-522.

post-Machiavellian Moment United States was in decline.[398] The need to play for time meant that the United States could not stave off decline but only slow its advance through tactics suggested by Nixon and Kissinger. Thus, the long term strategy and the international structure were not so much a device to create stability as to hold off the United States' eventual decline as long as possible.

The extensive criticism suggested above may be too extreme, but it does present an interesting point. Kissinger accepted the Soviet Union's emergence as a superpower as a permanent change in the international system. Faced with this apparently permanent change, Kissinger seemed resigned to dealing with the Soviet Union. He suggested that a weakened United States had to pursue a moderate policy that reflected the limits of its power to confront this emergent global rival. The international system and the Soviet Union have changed dramatically since Kissinger's term in office. In hindsight, these changes might suggest that Kissinger might have misjudged both the long-term implications of the Soviet Union's rise to super power status and the need to pursue a moderate policy. However, Kissinger could easily counter this criticism by suggesting that his policies and his philosophy were necessary for the time and the problems he faced. Such a defence has merit, but it begs the question of the statesman's most important asset: foresight. According to Kissinger a successful statesman will not confuse short-term variations for long-term developments even if he has to take the current correlation of forces as his guiding principle. The concern for the correlation of powers on hand leads us to the final method for creating and maintaining Kissinger's world order vision--force.

A final method for achieving or defending Kissinger's world order vision was **force** or the **threat of force.** The threat of force can help negotiations and it can help deter other states from relying on force to change the international status quo. Force could be necessary to defend the stability of the international system and Nixon and Kissinger justified some of their decisions to use force on this basis. For example, the use of force or the threat to use force was displayed in operations ranging from the covert interventions in Chile to brinkmanship with the Soviet Union

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[398] See Dickson, Meaning of History, pp. 160-162 and J.G.A. Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine political thought and the Atlantic republican tradition (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1975) pp. 531-552.

over the Middle East.[399] At another level, these events demonstrated that the United States could still act forcefully even with the domestic problems created by the Vietnam War. The use of force would support international stability on two levels. On the immediate level, it would stop the destabilising activity. The use of force would demonstrate that the United States would act to support the international stability and thereby demonstrate its willingness to back up its treaties or international negotiations should they be threatened. The threat of force could support negotiations by signalling the parameters of the issue. For example, the threat of force may or may not have aided negotiations over the petroleum crisis. In an infamous *Businessweek* interview, Kissinger appeared to threaten military intervention if the petroleum crisis threatened to strangle the economies of the western democracies. [400]

Fourth. What were the threats to Kissinger's world order? The greatest threat to Kissinger's world order was the real or apparent **loss of the United States' will or confidence** to act internationally. If the domestic public opinion did not support foreign policy, it would be difficult to maintain an active foreign policy. Kissinger, as Secretary of State, had only an indirect effect upon domestic policy, but he understood that he had to educate the public about the international problems facing the United States. He noted that in A World Restored, that the acid test of any foreign policy is its domestic support.[401] On this test, Kissinger failed. His foreign policy and his vision of the world order did not generate adequate public support for a variety of reasons. He failed in part, because his policies upset the conservatives for its apparent amorality and the apparent loss of strategic advantage to the Soviet Union. The liberal critics considered Kissinger and Nixon's foreign policy methods, especially the secrecy and centralisation of foreign policy, to be anti-democratic. Domestic support was eroded further by the Watergate scandal. Even though Kissinger was relatively unscathed by Watergate, he reaped the indirect problems as tried to pick up the international pieces. Watergate created a crisis of authority that hindered his ability to maintain his foreign policy. The crisis required him to combat criticisms of centralisation and

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[399]See Bundy, A Tangled Web, pp. 503-509 on covert operations. See pp. 440-442 on the Middle East Crisis. See also Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, pp. 575-611 on the Middle East Crisis. On Chile see pp. 374-406.
[400]DOSB 27 January 1975, p. 101.
[401]Kissinger, A World Restored, p. 326.

secretiveness, by stressing that he would try to build relations with the legislature and carry on an open foreign policy. No foreign policy vision can prepare for a president's resignation, but the need to have Nixon at the helm suggested an inflexibility within Kissinger's foreign policy philosophy. In any case, the damage created by Watergate was too great to overcome and as a result Kissinger's foreign policy lost domestic support. While he deserves credit for maintaining foreign policy stability during the transition from Nixon to Ford, Kissinger became a liability when his foreign policy became an issue during Ford's failed election bid.[402]

The United States had to possess the will and confidence to act in the international system to offset the second main threat to Kissinger's world view: **the Soviet Union**. The Soviet Union, even in the age of détente, could still attempt to change regional balances of power and the central balance of power. An example of the threats to the regional balance of power was the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. The war nearly wrecked the policy of détente because Soviet client states launched a surprise attack on Israel. The war weakened détente both internationally and domestically. The international problems were slowly resolved by communication and adjustments within the linkage framework, but the domestic problems were harder to resolve. To critics in the United States, détente appeared to be giving more to the Soviet Union than the United States were gaining in return. In the Middle East, the policy failed to modify the Soviet Union's external behaviour. It appeared that détente and linkage politics were not modifying the Soviet Union's relations with its client states. Kissinger was caught between the domestic unrest and the international pressures. To offset both pressures, he tried to find a successful middle path. Kissinger could not succeed without a strong president to dampen the fluctuations and keep both sets of pressures from feeding on each other.

A third threat to Kissinger's world view was **instability**. Kissinger and Nixon based their foreign policy upon the concept of stability. The credibility of their search for stability was threaten by any example of instability that arose from the direct US-USSR competition, the struggle over scarce resources, or simply a regional disturbance. The threat of instability, often a

[402]Two incidents highlight Kissinger's slide, the first is when Ford stripped him of the position of National Security Adviser to deflect criticism. The second was the banning of the word détente from press releases to deflect increased criticism during the election. Kissinger became the focus of Carter's attacks on the administration's foreign policy style. See Kissinger, Years of Renewal, pp 834-844.

perceptual problem as much as a physical problem was easier to overcome with a strong foreign policy president who could counter criticism and instil confidence in his policies. Kissinger needed a strong president to carry out bold and timely acts to restrain instability. Some instability was to be expected in the world but the president's authority and the appearance of control would do much to offset larger concerns. However, instability created by political and economic crisis offsets claims that the administration's foreign policy and its structure of peace were enhancing stability. On the domestic front, the appearance of instability especially in the face of claims of stability could create public doubt over the administration's effectiveness. To offset this problem, Nixon and Kissinger sought to make foreign policy actions appear decisive when dealing with threats to instability. The threat of instability and the need to act decisively in the face of instability created two further problems. The first problem was differentiating minor threats from major threats to instability. The second problem was calibrating the response to the threat.

Geoffery Sloan described the symptoms of the first problem as the challenge of discriminate globalism.[403] Even though Kissinger and Nixon had reduced the ideological globalism of the previous administration, they too pursued a globalist foreign policy. They faced a less serious problem than the Johnson administration, but they still faced the problem of discerning between vital and lesser interests. This problem remained even if the standard had changed from ideology to power. The second problem, calibrating the proper response, was a more difficult problem because it reflected a practical problem rather than a conceptual problem. If Kissinger acted too strongly he would invite charges of overreacting, and acting too lightly would invite the charges that he was allowing a situation to spin out of control. In a broad sense, Kissinger tended to overact rather than ignore problems. The three most apparent overreactions were Cambodia, Chile, and the *Mayaguez* incident. The goal is not to analyse these events, but to suggest that the public perceived them, to be acts where the Kissinger and Nixon, and later Ford, overacted. Cambodia and Chile both demonstrated the apparent problem of secrecy while the *Mayaguez* demonstrated the apparent willingness to use force out of proportion to the ends. The case can be made that the administrations responded properly, but the events and the charges suggest that the administration was susceptible to and sensitive of charges that it was overreacting

[403] See Sloan, Geopolitics, pp. 181-189.

rather than acting moderately. An exception to the charge of overreaction was response the economic problems. Even though the administration acted quickly to address the petroleum crisis, Nixon and Kissinger appeared to be taken by surprise and seemed to be one step behind.[404]

Kissinger appeared to respond slowly to the economic crises and critics charged that Kissinger failed to pay enough attention to the emerging economic form of power and the problem of interdependence.[405] Critics charge that Kissinger's failure to head off the crisis and create a long term solution to the problem demonstrated that he failed to developing an intellectual framework to deal with change. In particular, the critics suggest that he overemphasised the central bipolar conflict rather than incorporating the emerging trends into the central problem.[406] Kissinger appeared to be reacting to the crisis rather than working it into a long term strategy. This is not to say that that Kissinger and Nixon failed to respond. They did succeed in their short-term efforts to meet the petroleum crisis and to build a structure of peace and give the US more flexibility, but the success of their long-term strategy remains doubtful. As William Bundy argues their structure did not survive them because it required too much manipulation. The structure did not show how the correct balance between competition and Co-Operation could be maintained without the constant attention of Nixon and Kissinger.[407]

Section Two, the United States' role in the world

Kissinger believed that the United States had an important role to play in the world, but he saw that role differently from how Rusk perceived it. The difference in their views reflected the changes in the United States and the international system. Unlike Rusk's broad view of the United States as an example to the world or a "city upon the hill", Kissinger had a narrower view. The United States could not return to the optimism of Kennedy's inaugural because that period was not only gone chronologically, but psychologically because of the trauma of Vietnam. If a new

[404] Even though *Mayaguez* crisis occurred under Ford, the response to it did reflect Kissinger's view of the international system. See Richard G. Head, Frisco W. Short, and Robert C. McFarlane, Crisis Resolution: Presidential Decision Making in the *Mayaguez* and Korean Confrontations (Boulder: Westview Press, 1978) pp. 101-148.
[405] See Brown, Crises, pp. 107-122.
[406] For an interesting analysis of the economic and political trends that culminated with the Nixon administration and how they influenced the United States' foreign policy, see Raymond Aron, Imperial Republic.
[407] See Bundy, A Tangled Web, pp. 510-522 on the failure to build.

structure of peace was to be developed, the United States could not do it alone, but it had to take the lead in the effort. The United States was now acutely aware that its power to shape the world was limited and was undertaking the complex task of retrenching its international position. Nixon and Kissinger were aware of the limit to the United States' power to act alone in shaping the world, but they feared the possibility that the United States would be unable to exert its power in a leadership role.[408] The United States, according to Kissinger, had to play three important and interconnected leadership roles: political, economic, and conceptual.

Leadership. The United States was a global political and economic leader.[409] In the political sphere, America was the leader of the NATO alliance structure. Kissinger understood that the United States was no longer the preponderant power in the international system, but he understood that it was still a central power and had an important role in the international system. The loss of power was as much material as it was psychological. Kissinger and Nixon's policies were designed to counter the psychological changes created by Vietnam as much as the material changes in the international system.[410] While the United States was engaged in the draining war for South Vietnam, its economic and political rivals were increasing their strength. Kissinger understood that the United States had to work within the limits of its powers. One way to do this was to rely more on its role as the leader of its various alliances. This strategy would offset the danger that an awareness of its limits would encourage isolationism or reduce support for an active foreign policy.[411] If the United States was to restrain the Soviet Union then it had to sustain an active foreign policy. One way to do this would be to emphasise that the United States was not carrying the burden but was sharing the load with its allies.

Nixon made alliances a central theme within his first state of the world address. Kissinger continued this theme. The changes in the United States and the international system made the issue of improving and strengthening the alliances with Western European states and with Japan a priority.[412] Vietnam had weakened the United States economically, politically, and

[408] See for example, DOSB 5 May 1975, p. 557.
[409]DOSB 6 October 1975.
[410] See for example the interview with L'Express DOSB 12 May 1975, p. 608.
[411]DOSB 15 December 1975, p. 848 "America's challenge today is to demonstrate a new kind of leadership--guiding by our vision, our example, and our energy, not by our predominance."
[412]DOSB 14 July 1975, p. 51.

militarily and it required the increased help of its allies to contain the Soviet Union. If the United States was to reduce tensions with the Soviet Union through the policy of détente, it had to maintain sufficient military strength to reinforce the reduced tensions. This would require the Western European states had to play a larger role. If the European states carried a larger defence burden, the United States could maintain freedom of action in its negotiations and its confrontations with the Soviet Union. Even as the United States was reducing its military commitments in Vietnam, it was encouraging its allies to pick up the slack in Europe.[413] Even as the United States was working to improve its alliance stricture, it had to tackle the economic problems that threaten it and its allies.

The United States took a leadership role in facing the economic problems. The petroleum crisis and the food crisis of the early 1970s made Kissinger acutely aware of the importance of economic issues. The crises demonstrated the economic interdependence of all nations the strategic potential of interdependence. A key difficulty was that economic problems were not as responsive to the tools of classical realpolitik as were political problems. The political system, where the underlying spirit was one of conflict, differed from the economic system, where the underlying spirit was one of Co-Operation. In the sense that both systems were disordered because of the United States' weakness, the economic system mirrored the political system. The crisis in each system could not be resolved without the United States and its capacity to play a leadership role. Kissinger believed that the economic crisis shared an important similarity with the political crisis because they each reflected the question of the international order. The United States had taken the lead in developing a new international structure to meet the political problems and it had to do the same for the long term economic problems.[414] In both the political and economic realms the United States had to demonstrate its creativity and perseverance in developing a new conceptual framework. The international structure of peace would develop a lasting order to end the chaos created by the economic crisis.

If the United States was to develop a new international order, the structure would have to deal with the endemic economic problems between North and South. Kissinger understood that

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[413]See Richard Rosecrance ed., America as an ordinary country : U.S. foreign policy and the future, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1976) p. 66.
[414]DOSB 2 June 1975, p. 718-719.

any structure would have to be built upon Co-Operation rather than resentment.[415] The desire to reduce the North-South problems was not completely altruistic. The economic interdependence of the world economies suggested that the petroleum and food crisis could have an adverse effect upon the western democracies. Thus Kissinger was concerned that the economic crises might undermine the strength of the United States' allies just at the time when it needed them to play a more important role.

The petroleum crisis and the economic problems would sap the will of the industrial democracies and weaken their domestic unity. The United States, as the lead economy and leader of the Western alliance, had to maintain its domestic unity in the face of these crises. Kissinger saw the United States' role as acting in support of its allies to soften the oil shocks and to take the lead in Organizing a collective response to the oil problem. In the international realm, the United State had to take a leadership role in building a co-operative world economic structure.[416]

The United States had to take the lead in restructuring and reconceptualizing **the international order.** The old bipolar international order was giving way to a new international order. The United States' relative weakness, the emergence of the Soviet Union as a great power, the increased strength o f Western Europe and Japan, and the food and petroleum crisis had shaken the old order. Kissinger believed that the world was poised between two futures. It could attempt to hold onto the old system and risk sliding into greater disorder and conflict or it could create a new order out of the old and ascend to a better more co-operative future. The United States and its allies held the key to developing and maintaining the future order and developing the new equilibrium.[417] If a stable structure of peace, based upon equilibrium, was to develop, the United States had to seize the chance. Kissinger warned that the United States public that it had an important role to play and that it could no shirk from that international role because of domestic problems.

> America now has an opportunity-and hence a duty--which comes rarely to a nation: to help shape a new peaceful international order. The challenge exists for us as a people, not as partisans of any cause. This is why the effort--even in periods of great domestic strain--has had bipartisan support.[418]

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[415]See DOSB 2 June 1975, p. 715.
[416] DOSB 25 November 1974, p. 743.
[417]DOSB 12 April 1976, p. 483.
[418] DOSB 16 September 1974, p. 375.

If the United States did not find the domestic unity or accept the duty to act in the international system, international peace and prosperity would be threatened. At the same time, Kissinger and the administration were quick to point to the limits of the United States' ability to achieve these tasks alone.[419] As a statesman, Kissinger understood that he had to find a middle ground between two conflicting goals. He had to convince the public that the United States had to maintain an active foreign policy but at the same time remind them that the United States' power to shape the world was limited. In other words, he had to show that the United States could act moderately in its attempt at the audacious task of reshaping the international system even as it retrenched its international position.

In shaping the international system, the United States had to reduce tensions with the Soviet Union. However, stability could only be achieved if the great powers made an effort at self restraint. As mentioned in the first section, this was the strategy of détente, but it also applies to the specific role the United States had to play in the world.

> There can be no peaceful international order without a constructive relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. There will be no international stability unless both the Soviet Union and the United States conduct themselves with restraint and unless they use their enormous power for the benefit of mankind.[420]

All states now had to take a greater responsibility for maintaining the international system.[421]

In shaping the international system, the United States had a role beyond stability. As the leader of the Western alliance, it had to set an example. The United States acted as an example of how the promise of progress could succeed and offered the hope of a better world. Even as Kissinger accepted this goal he remained a strong proponent of realpolitik. The United States' ideals could not replace the balance of power or stability; they were the goal beyond stability.

Section Three, what was Kissinger's vision of the United States?

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[419] See for example Joseph Sisco in DOSB 15 April 1974, p. 381. "Our interests, our strengths, our resources compel an active and responsible role in the world. This does not mean there is, or should be, a Washington blueprint for every international conflict-- military or economic. It does mean a policy of selective engagement on the critical problems of our times."
[420] DOSB 14 October 1974, p. 505. Kissinger also reiterated the need for restraint in DOSB 25 November 1974 p. 742.
[421] DOSB 11 November 1974, p. 645.

Henry Kissinger was an immigrant and this had an influence on how he viewed the United States. Like Dean Rusk, he achieved the American dream by reaching one of the highest and most important posts in the United States. As an immigrant, he did not take the United States' promise for granted. Kissinger saw the promise of United States: it strength, prosperity, and ideals, through a prism created by his childhood experiences in Germany and the United States. Kissinger had fled Nazi Germany and the breakdown of order within that country left a lasting impression and influenced his view of the United States. As an immigrant, Kissinger also remained somewhat removed from the American experience and this influenced how he understood the United States. Before he became Secretary of State, Kissinger had not travelled widely throughout the United States. In large part, he spent most his life on the East Coast.[422] While this does not disqualify Kissinger in any way, this does suggest that he was never had a visceral involvement with the United States in the way that Rusk as a Southerner was. In a certain sense, Kissinger possessed an abstract analytical view of the United States and its role in the world. Such a view may have helped him in some ways, but it did set him apart in understanding the United States role in the world. In a sense, Kissinger viewed the United States from the outside. He developed his foreign policy views from the international system rather than from a sense of the distinctive relationship between United States foreign policy and its domestic structure.[423] This is to say that Kissinger did not take into account how the United States' founding principles created the domestic regime and thereby influenced and limited the foreign policy the United States might pursue.

The main theme of Kissinger's view of the United States was the psychological question of confidence. In the wake of the Vietnam War, the United States appeared to be a deeply troubled and had apparently lost confidence in its world role. These problems appeared to sap its capability and willingness to shape the world to meet its own interests. When Nixon and Kissinger came into power, they saw the United States' crisis mainly in psychological terms

[422] On Kissinger's lack of familiarity with the "Heartland" see Walter Lafeber, "Kissinger and Acheson: The Secretary of State and the Cold War," Political Science Quarterly 92, no. 2. (Summer, 1977): 194.
[423] Kissinger accepted that by focusing on power he was acting in an "un-American" way. By this he did not mean that he was ignorant of the American experience, but that he was trying to educate Americans to the requirements of international power. See for example, Kissinger, White House Years, p. 1089.

stemming from the material changes in the United States international position. In Kissinger's confirmation statement, he reiterated the point that the United States' confidence and its ability to act decisively in the world had to be restored. He tied two themes within his vision of the United States: the **need to restore American confidence and the need for unity at home.** The two themes were interrelated by the psychological consequences of the United States' failure in Vietnam. As Secretary of State, Kissinger understood that for foreign policy to succeed it needed bipartisan success. Developing a consensus in the aftermath of Watergate was particularly difficult because Nixon had achieved political success by exploiting divisions rather than healing them. In this time of crisis, Kissinger stressed that if the United States was to maintain a successful foreign policy then it needed domestic unity to overcome the bitter divisions created by Vietnam.[424] In his statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he stressed that confidence in the United States was needed for domestic unity and to support an active foreign policy.

> How well we perform in foreign policy depends importantly on how purposeful we are at home. America has passed through a decade of domestic turbulence which has deepened divisions and even shaken our national self-confidence in some measure.[425]

Domestic support and domestic unity were strengthened by the extent to which foreign policy reflected and promoted the United States' identity. To some extent all states rely upon their national identity to strengthen support for their foreign policy, but the United States' this identity plays a decisive role. Statesmen that can express foreign policy goals in terms of national identity issues, for example Manifest Destiny, tap into a deep reservoir of support. Relying upon national identity is not without its costs and dangers. One danger was that a policy could be oversold and as a result the statesman, like Rusk, could be criticised for stressing national identity too much. Rusk oversold the case of identifying the United States' security with the security of South Vietnam and his rhetoric made the issue appear to be a crusade. Aware of this danger Kissinger was that the previous administration had weakened its foreign policy by pursuing a moralistic

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[424] Kissinger's views on domestic unity strike an interesting parallel with Hobbe's views on the dangers of domestic disunity and their possible effect on a state's ability to carry out foreign relations. See George Kateb, "Hobbes and the Irrationality of Politics," Political Theory 17, no. 3 (August 1989): 356, 380, 383, and 387.
[425] DOSB 1 October 1973, p. 425.

foreign policy.[426] Kissinger believed that this approach had made the foreign policy inflexible by tying it to abstract standards rather than focusing on the distribution of power surrounding an issue. In this belief, he echoed Kennan's dislike for the legalistic-moralistic strain in the United States' foreign policy. Kissinger was not as vehement as Kennan in his attacks on this tradition because he understood that such principles, if properly handled, could provide a valuable foreign policy resource.[427] The key was to use the United States' self-confidence, its exceptionalism, to support an active foreign policy without having such principles dominate the policy.[428] Kissinger was aware that identifying foreign policy too closely with national identity could make his policy inflexible. Thus, the task of reconstructing the United States' self-confidence reflected the larger task of reconstructing its foreign policy, but the first goal could not be allowed to dominate the second.

Domestic unity was needed to rebuild foreign policy. The United States had to put its domestic house in order so that it could develop its foreign policy.[429] The continued debate and divisions created by the Vietnam policy hindered the United States' ability to pursue the active foreign policy needed to meet the international challenges. Kissinger stressed this point in his confirmation statement.

> These traumatic events [Vietnam and Watergate] have cast lengthening shadows on our traditional optimism and self-esteem. A loss of confidence in our own country would inevitably be mirrored in our international relations. Where once we ran the risk of thinking we were too good for the world, we might now swing to believing we are not good enough.[430]

The domestic turmoil reflected the international turmoil and Kissinger had to reconcile the domestic demands with what he wanted to accomplish in the international system. He understood the danger to a consistent and active foreign policy from a public opinion that alternated between involvement and disengagement. To counter the potential effects from these dangers, he sought to construct a foreign policy that would dampen these extremes and encourage a consistent and

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[426] See Kissinger, Diplomacy, p. 676.
[427] See George F. Kennan, American diplomacy, 1900-1950 (London: Secker & Warburg, 1952). For a counter argument see Louis Henkin, How nations behave: law and foreign policy (London: Pall Mall, 1968).
[428] See DOSB 29 October 1973, p. 527. "This country has always had a sense of mission. Americans have always held the view that America stood for something above and beyond its material achievements."
[429] See DOSB 29 October 1973, p. 531. "If we are to shape a world community we must first restore community at home."
[430] DOSB 1 October 1973, p. 428. See also DOSB 29 October 1973, p. 525.

determined approach to international affairs. To achieve this end, he stressed repeatedly that the United States was and should be confident even if its power was relatively diminished.[431] He was attempting to counter the negative views and apparent loss of purpose within the United States by stressing that it still had an important and necessary role to play in the international system.

The **second theme** to Kissinger's view of the United States is that he viewed it from a **conservative** perspective. Conservative here is used a philosophical term rather than to describe the Nixon administration's political orientation. Kissinger was a conservative because his political outlook rejected the main tenet of the liberal paradigm: progress. In a 1968 essay, Kissinger suggested that the United States' commitment to the liberal ideal of progress in the international arena had contributed to a foreign policy of undifferentiated globalism.[432] A further aspect of Kissinger's conservatism was his deep concern for stability and equilibrium within the international system. He did not believe such stability could be achieved or maintained upon a universal policy of progress. The United States could use its strength to bring about measured and ordered change in the international system, but Kissinger focused upon the limits of the United States' power. He did not seek to use that power to transform the international system to make it meet universal principles. Kissinger was adamantly opposed to drastic change, or attempts at reforms that went beyond the limits of power to accomplish. Michael Smith, quoting Kissinger's A World Restored, pointed out; "Only the liberal leader, governed by a shallow doctrine of progress and illusion of rational reform, fails to appreciate the mean of the limits of necessity; his efforts are bound to end in defeat."[433] In sum, Kissinger's conservative foreign policy reflected the changes in the international system and within the United States. After the Vietnam War, the United States struggled to reconcile its failure with previous claims to exceptionalism.

A third theme is that Kissinger saw the United States as an ordinary country.[434] In this regard, he accepted that the United States, through the tragedy of Vietnam, had become like

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[431] The word confidence recurs often in Kissinger's speeches during his time as Secretary of State.
[432] Henry A. Kissinger "Central Issues in American foreign policy" in Kermit Gordon ed. Agenda for the Nation (Washington D.C. Brookings Institution, 1968) cited in Seyom Brown, The Crises of Power (New York Columbia University Press 1979), p. 5.
[433] Michael J. Smith, Realist Thought from Weber to Kissinger (London: Louisiana State Press, 1986), p.199.
[434] See Richard Rosecrance, ed., American as an Ordinary Country: U.S. foreign policy and the future (London: Cornell University Press, 1976).

the European great powers. Within in the context of the Machiavellian Moment, and in contrast to Rusk, Kissinger did not posit a difference between the **Old World and the New World.** For Kissinger, the New World now shared the same "sins". Vietnam taught the United States about the tragedy and limits of power.[435] The tragedy and the changed international system, demonstrated by the constraints of interdependence, meant that the United States had to pursue a more realistic and therefore less moralistic foreign policy.[436] In constructing his international structure and managing the international system, Kissinger down played the idea of the United States' exceptionalism as a guide to foreign policy. He saw the exceptionalism as a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. Exceptionalism was important for domestic unity, but it did not contribute directly to foreign policy. This is not to say that Kissinger rejected the United States' principles or that he was amoral. On the contrary, he believed in the United States' ideals, and spoke eloquently about them, but he did not see them as a determining factor in foreign policy or the international system. He constantly desired to restrain such concerns with the practical needs of world order. He did not see national interest bound up with its transcendent principles in the way that Rusk continually made reference to the UN charter. Kissinger sought to put United States' foreign policy on what he believed to be a more solid footing: the balance of power.

In Vietnam, the United States had learned the limits of its power. Kissinger saw this as a necessary development if the United States was to restructure its foreign policy on a more solid foundation. The limits of power would be the basis for learning our possibilities.[437] In other words, the United States had to accept that the unlimited globalism founded within the Johnson administration's moralistic rhetoric was no longer possible. It had to understand that there were limits to what it could do in the world and with that understanding undertake a balanced foreign policy. In making this point, Kissinger was also careful to avoid encouraging isolationism. The United States must not shrink from its duty. As a still important actor in the world, the United

[435] See for example DOSB 17 February 1975, p. 197. Where Kissinger says that America has acquired a sense of tragedy. As we will see in the next chapter, such a view suggests that Kissinger did not fully grasp the American experience because he failed to see that the American civil war had taught the United States the same brutal lessons of power and crusades in pursuit of virtues.
[436] See for example DOSB 11 November 1974, p. 630. Interview with James Reston of the New York Times.
[437] DOSB 16 September 1974, p. 373.

States had to accept that it still had an important role to play even though the Vietnam War had scarred it.[438] Kissinger's goal was to find a balance between pragmatism, necessitated by the limits to American power, and moral purpose, needed to legitimise foreign policy and rally domestic support. While Kissinger spoke eloquently of this problem and the responsibilities of a statesman in the face of these problems, he never offered a compelling answer to the problem.[439] Perhaps the problem does not have a solution, but to view the United States as an ordinary country runs counter to its historical tradition and thereby invites the loss of domestic support. Even though Kissinger might argue that a statesman must be able to transcend a nation's history to chart a new path, such a transcendence would mean a rejection of the United States' historical identity. Kissinger tried to change or transcend the United States' revolutionary tradition by turning it into a conservative power. This effort ran counter to the United States' founding principles that characterised it as a revolutionary country, not a status quo power.

In the pursuit of the United States' role in the world as the arbiter of the international order, Kissinger failed to see how revolutionary the American experiment has been in international affairs. Kissinger understood the importance of those ideals and may have accepted them personally, but as a statesman, he did not accept that the United States had a unique role to play in history. On the contrary, and perhaps to an extreme that may have undermined his foreign policy among the public, he saw the United States as a normal country. He calibrated his foreign policy upon the limits of power, to restrain the revolutionary powers within the international system, but he failed to realise that the United States' power stemmed from its own revolutionary ideology. Following on the idea of one world versus two worlds, Kissinger appeared not to see the United States through an American lens but through a European lens. In a sense, he was more at home with Kant and Spengler than with Madison, Hamilton, or Jay. The American promise as an idea or a grand experiment in liberty did not strike the same resonance with Kissinger as it did with Rusk. Thus he saw the United States to take on the traditional role of a great power rather than a power that represented ideals that would transform the world. As a "normal" superpower,

[438] See for example DOSB 11 November 1974, p. 643. Where Kissinger suggests that America must overcome its loss of innocence and meet the new challenges facing it.
[439] See DOSB 15 November 1976, pp. 597-605. On the general problems facing the American republic see Hannah Arendt, Crises of the Republic (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972).

the United States had to employ its' limited power to manage the world system to keep stable and avoid the dangers of instability that might lead to a general war. In the short term this policy worked, but it did not build a lasting foreign policy structure.

Kissinger sought to cast the United States' foreign policy role as managing the system, not to reforming it. He understood that the United States' power and position had forced it to be a status quo power, but he failed to realise how the United States' founding principles cast it as a revolutionary state. Kissinger and Nixon came upon the political scene at the moment when the United States realised that it could no longer maintain its visions of reform. After the Vietnam War, the United States now had to realise that its desire to reform the international system according to the principles bound up within the UN order was limited by that order. In other words, the United States could not rely upon its' previously preponderant power to transcend the system.

Chapter Five.

Rusk and Kissinger: The High Priest of Principle and the Dark Prince of Power.

Dean Rusk and Henry Kissinger represent, through their foreign policy philosophies, different sides of a conceptual divide in the United States' foreign policy created by the Vietnam War. At a general level, the differences between the philosophies are similar to what J.G.A. Pocock called the liturgical and the jeremiad modes in American history.[440] The liturgical mode celebrates the United States' exceptionalism and its commitment to liberalism whereas the jeremiad mode is critical of these excesses and, through this criticism, seeks to renew society. Identifying Rusk with the liturgical mode and Kissinger with the jeremiad mode allows us a **first cut** at understanding of the differences between their foreign policy philosophies. At first glance, it appears that Rusk, fulfilling Kennedy and Johnson's rhetoric, commits the United States' power and prestige to support a world order threatened in South Vietnam. Kissinger, following Nixon's lead, appears to correct the over-extension by retrenching the United States' foreign policy. Kissinger's goal is to bring the United States' power and prestige back into balance with its commitments. However, such a general view can be misleading because it offers a superficial understanding of the two men and their foreign policy philosophies and we must look beyond the first cut.

Rusk represents the liturgical mode because he celebrates American exceptionalism and the universalistic liberalism that justified the United States' post-World War Two foreign policy. Rusk believed that the United States' exceptionalism was a dynamic element in world history and this belief characterised his approach to foreign policy. The belief shaped the United States' involvement in Vietnam. The outlook contained a strong sense of optimism in the United States' ability, and the institutions it helped to create, to shape the world and achieve stability, if not peace. The confidence and optimism derived from the belief that liberal democracy represented an ideal system for meeting the aspirations of mankind.[441] A key symbol of the liberal world order was the UN charter. As a liberal internationalist, Rusk believed that the UN Charter and the principle of collective security offered the United States and the world the best means to avoid another general war. He believed the UN charter reflected the United States' founding principles

[440] J.G.A Pocock "Between Gog and Magog: The Republican Thesis and the Ideologia Americana" Journal of the History of Ideas 48, no. 2 (April-June, 1987): 346.
[441] Warren I. Cohen, Dean Rusk (Totawa NJ. 1980), p. 321.

and these principles represented the best hope for reforming the international system. Connecting the United States' exceptionalism with the UN charter, Rusk linked the United States' security with the security of the international system.

Identifying the United States with the international system fulfilled and yet departed from the liberal internationalist outlook that emerged after World War Two.[442] It fulfilled it by arguing for a consistent and extensive involvement in world affairs by the United States. Rusk expressed, through his speeches, a belief that the conflict in South Vietnam represented a test for the United States' commitment to a decent world order. The commitment reflected the language and outlook expressed by John Foster Dulles who created the United States commitment to South Vietnam. At a more general level, identifying the United States with the international system fulfilled Rusk's belief that the UN's founding signalled the emergence of a new era in world politics. Even though the Cold War side-tracked the UN's promise, Rusk believed it represented the best hope for states to achieve international stability and avoid a general war. However, to support that promise, the United States had to support the Charter's principles. Rusk believed that these principles were at stake in Vietnam. Here he departed from the liberal internationalism tradition by linking the United States' security with the security of a world order built on the principle of collective security. This challenged the United States to undertake a role it was unprepared to accept.

Rusk viewed the United States' world role as one where the United States had to take the lead in defending and promoting a decent world order. The decent world order would be based upon the principles enshrined in the UN charter. In Vietnam, that decent world order was threatened and the United States, in fulfilling its own principles and the principles it had identified with in the international system, had to respond. The failure of that commitment changed the United States. The war created deep divisions within the United States' leadership and public over its involvement in South Vietnam and more generally its role in the world.[443] The American public grew weary of trying to support a world order based upon universalistic principles.

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[442] Orrin Schwab, Defending the Free World: John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and the Vietnam War, 1961-1965 (London: Praeger Studies in Diplomacy and Strategic Thought Praeger, 1998) and Robert R. Tomes Apocalypse Then: American Intellectuals and the Vietnam War, 1954-1975 (New York: New York University Press, 1998).
[443] See for example, Ole R. Holsti and James N. Rosenau, American leadership in world affairs: Vietnam and the breakdown of consensus, (London : Allen & Unwin , 1984).

Reforming the world and reforming the United States was beyond the capacity of the American regime. To choose one would require the exclusion of the other. The Vietnam War undermined the domestic consensus on foreign policy. The war in support of a world order was also undermining the central military balance with the Soviet Union. As the United States faltered in its attempt to uphold the world order, it faced pressure to turn inward, to fulfil its domestic promise, even as the international system was changing to create a greater threat to the United States. The Soviet Union appeared to be getting stronger while the United States fought a debilitating war to uphold a decent world order.

The United States supported the principles of the UN charter and the internationalism it embodied, but the cost of Vietnam proved too great physically and psychologically. The American public rejected the universalistic foreign policy demands created by post-war liberalism because it required the United States to move beyond a supportive role to take on responsibility for the international system. It was one thing to support these principles when challenged and another to take responsibility for fulfilling them wherever and whenever they were challenged. In South Vietnam, the United States was not only facing a task of defending an international order but engaging in nation-building. One task is difficult but both tasks simultaneously proved impossible. The stalemate in South Vietnam and the domestic political strains created by Lyndon Johnson's extensive reforms created a tension that paralysed and then undermined the United States' foreign policy. In the end, the American public rejected the demands created by the United States' post-war liberalism. The foreign policy enacted by Rusk and Johnson changed the United States by forcing it to confront, in Vietnam, the universalistic demands within its political principles.

Nixon and Kissinger stepped into the conceptual breech to offer a solution to the failure of globalism. Their side of the conceptual divide represents a foreign policy vision deeply influenced by the United States' failure in Vietnam and the changing international system. Kissinger was concerned with the psychological effect created by failure in Vietnam and the consequent need to reassess foreign policy priorities. The reassessment suggests some similarities with the jeremiad mode of American history. The jeremiad is a political sermon designed to criticise those who have fallen away from the path of righteousness. An American jeremiad is

one that focuses on the promise and the belief in the future success if reforms are undertaken. The European jeremiad is more pessimistic in that it does not suggest that reforms will return the righteous to the promised destination. Kissinger appears to be "preaching" a jeremiad since he is seeking to renew the United States foreign policy by placing it upon a correct or corrected foundation.[444] However, a key point to remember is that Kissinger was not "preaching" an American jeremiad to reform and thereby renew the United States, but to prepare it to accept a limited future. His European jeremiad has the goal of lessening the psychological trauma that would be created when Americans realised their future was limited. Kissinger presents a pragmatic view of the limits of the United States' power that contrasts with Rusk's expansive universalistic liberalism. Kissinger relied upon the theme of limits and the need to remain engaged despite these limits to lessen the psychological trauma. He was attempting to counter the trend towards isolation. Kissinger presented a foreign policy philosophy, through his speeches, that expressed that United States needed to remain confident, in this troubled time, and adapt to a reduced capacity to influence events in the world. The rhetorical strategy for maintaining confidence and engagement in the world also masked Nixon, and Kissinger's, attempt to create a deeper structural change.

Beyond the rhetorical flourishes, Nixon and Kissinger attempted to transform the United States' foreign policy to correct what they understood to be the problems created by the over-commitment in South Vietnam. On the surface, they worked to reshape the international system to accommodate the changes in the United States and the Soviet Union. Beneath the surface, they were attempting a more radical goal--to shift the United States' foreign policy approach away from the post-war liberalism to a more pragmatic policy guided by the principles of realpolitik.[445]

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[444] Sacan Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad (Madison : (Wis) University of Wisconsin Press, 1978) pp. 4-29. Bercovitch, in modifying the work of Perry Miller, differentiates between an American Jeremiad focusing on renewal within the promise and potential of America against the more pessimistic and anxious European Jeremiad. In this typology, Kissinger's jeremiad would be European because his anxiety over the United States' future belies a belief in its power to renew itself and the world. In other words, Kissinger believed that the Soviet Union would be a permanent problem and that the United States' could only hope to adapt to its diminished role and he did not see the possibility that the United States could achieve more than the modest goal of reducing tensions with the Soviet Union and stabilising the international system. For a careful assessment of Miller and Bercovitch's variations on Miller, see Francis T. Butt, "The Myth of Perry Miller" The American Historical Review 87, no. 3. (Jun., 1982): 665-694.

[445] This is not to suggest that the United States has never practised realpolitik. On the contrary, the United States has rarely shied away from realpolitik if it suited its interests. What is being

This is not to suggest a simply dichotomy between realism and idealism, but to suggest that Nixon and Kissinger pursued a different view of the international system and the United States' role in it. In other words, they were attempting to shift the United States away from its foundation in liberalism to a more concrete, but limited, foundation of power.

Nixon and Kissinger pursued a more limited policy because the United States had been weakened by the Vietnam War. At the same time, that weakness magnified the changes in the international system. Kissinger pursued a more limited policy. He confronted the combined tasks of overcoming the domestic trauma created by the Vietnam War and managing the international challenge created by the increased threat from the Soviet Union. The tasks were connected because they both stemmed from the United States' weakness, in the post-Vietnam era, but they required different strategies. Internationally, Kissinger attempted to create a foreign policy, relying upon limited resources, that could manage the Soviet Union's emergence as a rival super power. Domestically, Kissinger attempted to build a foreign policy consensus that could overcome the trauma of the Vietnam war. He faced the awkward task of telling Americans that they had to be engaged in the world, but they could only have limited powers at their disposal. His pessimism led him to suggest to friends that they read Spengler's Decline and Fall of the West because he believed that the United States and the West faced a similar crisis.

The pessimistic outlook was reflected in Kissinger's foreign policy philosophy which suggested the United States must act *as if* it had suffered a Machiavellian Moment and now faced decline rather than the possibility of renewal. Kissinger believed that a post-Vietnam United States was now an "ordinary" country. The United States would have to face the future with a sober understanding that the question was not whether United States had declined but the extent of

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suggested here is that Kissinger and Nixon were trying to change the foundation of American foreign policy philosophy away from its inherent liberalism to one based upon realpolitik. Their approach to the United States position in world affairs was as if it had suffered a Machiavellian Moment. The United States had to retrench and reorder its priorities because it no longer had the will or the resources to continue to defend a decent world order. The liberal vision of a decent world order had vanished in the jungles of Vietnam. A new world order was emerging, but it was one in which the instability of the international system, and a weakened United States, recovering from its Vietnam failure, required a new approach to foreign policy. Kissinger and Nixon would attempt to place foreign policy on a solid foundation of power. The backlash by the American public to Nixon and Kissinger's foreign policy was due in part to their attempt to overthrow that inherent liberal tradition.

that decline and how the United States would respond.[446] The United States would have to live within its limits and within history.[447] As mentioned above, Kissinger realised that his foreign policy would have to overcome the trauma created by the awareness that the United States' exceptionalism was at an end. The concern was that this psychological trauma might undermine the domestic support for a necessarily active foreign policy. To keep the domestic uncertainty from undermining the needed activist foreign policy; Kissinger, through his speeches, stressed that the United States still had the ability to act and determine its future. Even if the United States was no longer expanding the sphere of liberty, it could, at least, conserve the existing pockets of liberty. In this role, Kissinger and his policies represented an opportunity to buy time for the United States, but only if it pursued a new, limited, approach to foreign policy.

Nixon and Kissinger's foreign policy changed the United States. They faced a variety of foreign policy tasks, but the most pressing task was to manage changes in the United States and its role in the international system. A second task related to the first was to extract the United States from South Vietnam. The third task was to address the central balance between the United States and the Soviet Union. As Secretary of State, Kissinger continued to work within the policy framework created during Nixon's first term. This framework was designed to reduce the commitment to a globalist foreign policy. To achieve this goal, Nixon and Kissinger attempted to re-found foreign policy on a less expansive formulation than ideology--power. The new foreign policy, guided by a conservative philosophy, disengaged the United States from Rusk's universalistic philosophy that had identified the United States with the world order. By disengaging, Nixon and Kissinger gained freedom of action to deal with the changes in the United States and the international system. At a domestic level, the changed foreign policy foundation promised to help him create a new domestic consensus for a more limited United States foreign policy. Internationally, the disengagement from the globalist foreign policy was designed to allow the United States to address the changes in the US-USSR relationship. However, Kissinger's success was also his undoing.

[446] See DOSB 27 January 1975, pp 96-102.

[447] See Kissinger, Years of Renewal, p. 1061. In a telling passage, Kissinger suggests that the United States must accept that its unique relationship with history is at an end.

Kissinger's foreign policy philosophy suggested policies that disengaged the United States foreign policy from a universalistic goal. In doing so, it cut against the grain of the strong tradition of American exceptionalism. This tradition identified the United States' role in the world with a mission to reform the world.[448] The change from Rusk to Kissinger meant that the United States was no longer identifying itself with a mission to reform the world.[449] The United States would have to live within its limits. The United States would identify itself with the more limited, although no less important goal, survival rather than becoming the moral or political arbiter for the world. At the base of the idea of survival is power. A state needs military and economic power if it is to survive. The change in foreign policy had been made in part because of the relative and absolute changes in the United States' power. Thus, in contrast to Rusk, Kissinger had identified the United States' interests on the more limited basis of power rather than universalistic principles.

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[448] See H.W. Brands, What America Owes the World: The Struggle for the Soul of Foreign Policy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). However, this thesis does not embrace fully Brands' duality of exemplarists and vindicationists. The duality does not fit the change from Rusk to Kissinger. To assume that the United States simply moves from one view to the other is to do violence to what binds both views together at the root. At the root, both views are bound by the United States exceptionalism. The United States is the new world and not of the old world. What changed between Rusk and Kissinger was not simply a change from exemplarist to vindicationist. Even though there is an unavoidable underlying continuity between the two men's foreign policy philosophy, they do represented fundamental alternatives regarding the identity of the United States. The change between the two was not only of how the United States viewed itself, but also its role in the world and how it viewed the world. The three are interconnected. The United States could accept a more limited, Kissingerian view of foreign policy, because the international system and the United States had changed. The attempt to fulfil the alternative Rusk suggested would have required a change in the United States and how it viewed its world role. The public and the international system were not willing to accept the full expression of that consequence. The United States faces a choice between Rusk and Kissinger and the choice is more important in the aftermath of the Cold War. However, to choose one is to begin to close off the other. The choice ultimately shapes the American regime in such a way that reverting to the other choice becomes harder to achieve. One could say that the choice presented in Vietnam resembled the choice the United States faced in 1945 with the advent of the UN. To accept the UN system and the United States' role in that system was to foreclose any return to isolationism because any return would require a destruction of the foreign policy apparatus built up over the past half century as well as undermining a world order that was designed to supplement rather than debilitate the United States' security. In the same way, the choice between Republic or Empire would have required the United States to undergo changes that would have closed off one alternative from the other. In Vietnam, the United States avoided empire, but it has not settled into the limited role of a republic because its foreign policy commitments, especially its commitment to the UN world order, constrain it.

[449] See DOSB 29 October 1973, p. 527. Kissinger suggested that "This country has always had a sense of mission. Americans have always held the view that America stood for something above and beyond its material achievements.... But when policy becomes excessively moralistic it may turn quixotic or dangerous. A presumed monopoly on truth obstructs negotiation and accommodation." In this Kissinger suggests that the United States might have mission but one that is not open ended but limited and mindful of the constraints on the United States power.

In doing so, Kissinger identified the United States as an "ordinary" country working within the international system rather than an "exceptional" country defining the international system. The change also reflected developments in how the United States perceived itself as a country. Kissinger failed to develop a domestic consensus in part because of the changed conception of the United States and its role in the international system that his foreign policy philosophy implied. Nixon and Kissinger failed to transform the United States' involvement in the international system. Thus, contrary to what Nixon and Kissinger may have claimed, a new world order did not emerge. The changes required Nixon and Kissinger to manage an international system that had to adapt to the United States' retreat from globalism. To accomplish this task, their foreign policy lowered tensions within the international system. Nixon and Kissinger replaced Rusk's expansive foreign policy with a more limited foreign policy philosophy. Their policy was more limited because the United States did not identify itself with the world order and the concept of legitimacy based upon a state's support for stability. Nixon and Kissinger attempted to remove the ideological struggle within the international system without solving it.

The chapter enlarges upon the comparisons made above by contrasting Rusk and Kissinger's philosophy of foreign policy by comparing their answers to the case study questions. The questions focus on their view of the world, the United States, and the United States' role in the world. The differences that emerge reflect the differences in foreign policy philosophies as much as changes within the United States. Even as changes, created by the Vietnam War, swept the United States and its foreign policy; Rusk and Kissinger shared an underlying interest in the United States' safety and purpose in the world. Domestic politics may have changed and that may have influenced the foreign policy choices, but such events do not change the United States' geopolitical position or its formal treaty obligations. However, the changes within the domestic sphere reflect and shape the changes in foreign policy. An example would be the crisis of liberalism in the 1960s.

At a philosophical level, the continuity between Rusk and Kissinger's foreign policies, unintended though it may have been at times, can be seen as the result of liberalism's continued primacy within the United States. Even though liberalism was challenged by alternatives, it did not disappear. However, the crisis of liberalism in the 1960s opened the door for alternative and

rival explanation for the United States' identity and its history. In particular, Republicanism emerged as an alternative philosophical paradigm for understanding the United States' history and its identity.[450] Republicanism was not simply the political affiliation of the party in power, although that can be important, but it reflected a fundamental ideological or philosophical debate within the United States about its founding, its history, its government, and its identity. Even though Republicanism emerged as an intellectual alternative, it did not displace the accepted liberal interpretation. Its failure to displace the underlying Liberal interpretation of the United States helps us to understand, in part, why Nixon and Kissinger's foreign policy failed to gain widespread domestic support. However, Nixon and Kissinger were initially accepted because the failure of liberal internationalism and the Vietnam War's influence required a reassessment of its foreign policy.[451]

The chapter's first section compares and contrast Rusk and Kissinger's world view based upon three areas: the scope of their world order (universalistic or limited); the basis for

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[450] While the literature on Republicanism is vast, it is suggestive that the major works within Republicanism emerged in the 1960s. See Cecilia Kenyon, "Republicanism and Radicalism in the American Revolution: An Old Fashioned Interpretation," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d. Series, XIX (1962): 153-182; Richard Buel, "Democracy and the American Revolution: A Frame of Reference," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d Series, XXI (1964): 165-190; Fredric C. Lane, "At the Roots of Republicanism," The American Historical Review 71, no. 2. (Jan., 1966): 403-420; Bernard Bailyn, The ideological origins of the American Revolution (Cambridge (Mass.) : Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1967); Gordon S. Wood, The Creation of the American Republic 1776-1787 (Chapel Hill (N.C.): University of North Carolina Press, 1969). Lance Gilbert Banning suggests that his dissertation contributed to the renewed interest in Republicanism. Lance Gilbert Banning, "Jeffersonian Ideology Revisited: Liberal and Classical Ideas in the New American Republic," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd. Ser., 43, no. 1. (Jan., 1986):. 3-19. Lance Gilbert Banning, "The Quarrel with Federalism: A Study in the Origins and the Character of Republican Thought" (Ph.D. diss., Washington University, 1971); Robert E. Shalhope, "Toward a Republican Synthesis: The Emergence of an Understanding of Republicanism in American Historiography," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd. Ser., Vol. 29, No. 1. (1972) 49-80; J.G.A. Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment : Florentine political thought and the Atlantic republican tradition, (Princeton (N.J.) : Princeton University Press, 1975). See also, Laurence Veysey, "The Autonomy of American History Reconsidered," American Quarterly 31, no. 4 (Autumn, 1979): 455-477 especially p. 458; Joyce Appleby, "Republicanism and Ideology," American Quarterly 37, no. 4 (1985): 461-473, Jeffrey C. Isaac, "Republicanism vs. Liberalism?: A reconsideration," History of Political Thought IX no. 2 (Summer 1988): 349-377 Daniel T. Rodgers, "Republicanism: the Career of a Concept," The Journal of American History 79, no. 1. (Jun., 1992): 11-38.

[451] See Charles Gati, "Another Grand Debate? The Limitationist Critique of American foreign policy" World Politics 21, no. 1 (October 1968): 133-151. Gati explores how the foreign policy debate is focused on finding an alternative to the globalist foreign policy that had failed in Vietnam. The concern is whether there needs to be complete re-assessment, or whether the current system could be modified to work more effectively because at hear the debate between limitationists and globalist is based upon realist premises. P. 135.

equilibrium or stability (power or principle); the basis for legitimacy in the system (self-restraint based upon power or principle).

Section One: World View

In 1971, Charles A. Barker suggested that the Vietnam War forced the United States to confront a dilemma that challenged its identity. The dilemma was compared to the one identified by Gunnar Myrdal, in An American Dilemma, where he wrote of the incompatibility between America's ideals and racial discrimination.[452] The dilemma discussed by Myrdal focused on the domestic political structure and asked whether the United States could be both unequal and free. Barker's dilemma focused on foreign policy and how the United States relates to the world and asks whether the it could overcome the tension between law and power. On the one hand, the United States professed belief in supporting a multilateral world, demonstrating a respect for law. On the other, it acts unilaterally within that system, demonstrating a reliance on power. The dilemma between force and law offers a **second cut** at understanding the differences between Rusk and Kissinger's foreign policy philosophies. We can see Rusk attempting to work within a multilateral system that the United States helped to create. Kissinger sought to develop the United States' freedom of action in an international system where it lacked its previous preponderance. However, the dilemma for the United States is not simply choosing one or the other approach because it cannot simply remove itself from the multilateral or interdependent world. The dilemma is how to balance or blend the competing imperatives of power and principle. In a multilateral world, Rusk would be aware, as he was regarding Vietnam, that the United States had to act unilaterally. On the other hand, Kissinger was aware of the multilateral nature of the world and interdependence created constraints on the United States' unilateral actions. Even though they are two different concepts, interdependence and mulitlateralism demonstrate constraints on unilateralism. The balance between power and principle is the key element in explaining equilibrium in the international system.[453] The blend or balance reflects how each man viewed the world, the United States, and the United States' role in the world.

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[452] Charles A. Barker, "Another American Dilemma: Multilateral Authority versus Unilateral Power" in Power and Law: American dilemma in world affairs Papers of the Conference on Peace Research in History. ed. by Charles A. Barker, (London: John Hopkins Press, 1971), p. 3

[453] Kissinger's first book, A World Restored, discussed the importance of maintaining an equilibrium within the Concert of Europe period that developed after the Napoleonic wars. Paul

security was based upon the belief that peace was indivisible. It was also designed to work for every member of the UN, not just for a select few.

Rusk pursued these universal themes because he believed they offered the best chance for stability in the international system, avoiding a general war, and creating a decent world order. His outlook was shaped by his belief in liberalism, his legal training, and the experience of World War Two. The UN's founding and its collective security principle ushered in a new era in world politics according to Rusk. As the most important founding member, the United States, according to Rusk, had to support it. Rusk argued that the principles within the UN charter had to be upheld if conflicts were to be kept from spiralling into a general war. As a multilateral organisation, collective security benefits all the members of the collective. When a state seeks to change the political status quo through military force, it is in the interest of the other states to oppose them either directly or indirectly. It is in their interest if they are the state being attacked, but it is in the interest of other states because as a precedent it might encourage other states to seek military methods for political change. Collective security could be seen as an insurance policy against overt military aggression. While that is a simple analysis of collective security, it exemplifies what Rusk believed the UN charter and the world order it represented.

The United States had played a central role in founding the UN. Rusk argued that if the principle of collective security was not supported, the order based on that principle would be jeopardised. His view reflected the failure of collective security before World War Two, when the democracies failed to stand up at Munich against Germany's threats of military aggression. According to Rusk history could be repeating itself in Vietnam and he argued that if collective security failed there it would encourage further aggression. The United States, according to Rusk, had to support collective security because he did not see any alternative to it. If the United States' commitment to South Vietnam failed, it might undermine the United States' credibility. Rusk would often ask rhetorically; "If the principle of collective security failed, how else could the world avoid a spiral into a general war?"[459] If international legitimacy, as the rule of law, ceased to exist, states would be encouraged to return to an era where military force would settle political

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[459]See Transcript, Dean Rusk Oral History Interview II, 9/26/69, by Paige E. Mulhollan, Internet Copy, LBJ Library. Tape II, p. 17.

questions.[460] Rusk's outlook eventually led him to identify the United States' security with the security of the world order under threat in South Vietnam. The Vietnam War offers an insight into how Rusk's universalism, through the logic of collective security and the UN world order, tied into the issue of stability and legitimacy.

Like Kissinger, Rusk was concerned with the **stability** of the international system. Unlike Kissinger, Rusk focused on the principles of the UN charter and collective security as a basis for stability. He understood that the system's stability rested upon a combination of power and principle, but he subordinated the balance of power within the UN framework to the principle of the UN charter. The states that had accepted the UN charter should conduct their behaviour accordingly. The stability that would follow was backed up by collective security. In pursuing this ideal, Rusk overlooked the extent to which the balance of power at the heart of the UN system, the Security Council, could transcend the UN world order. Even though states subscribe to the principles of the UN charter this did not mean they would act accordingly if they believed the UN order threatened the physical or ideological survival of the regime.[461] In this instance, the great powers who are the permanent members of the UN Security Council, would rely upon their veto power to thwart such challenges. Rusk hoped that such acts could be avoided if the common principles were accepted because they would form the basis for dealing with threats to stability. The goal, therefore, was to maintain the peace by upholding the system and this depended upon avoiding destabilising changes.

Stability should not be confused with the simple defence of the status quo. Stability depends on how a system handles **change**. In Rusk's system, change would be directed through peaceful channels. Rusk envisaged an order that would moderate revolutionary change by channelling it away from violence and towards the procedures within the UN system. If a state threatened the stability of the world by preaching a revolutionary doctrine of change, then it had to

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[460] Ibid.

[461] For a good discussion of the balance of power at the heart of the UN see Ruth B. Russell, "The Management of Power and Political Organization: Some Observations on Inis L. Claude's Conceptual Approach," International Organization 15, no. 4 (Autumn 1961): 630-636. A further development on this theme can be seen in Earl C. Ravenal, "An Autopsy of Collective Security," Political Science Quarterly 90, no. 4 (Winter 1975/1976): 697-714 and Inis L. Claude, Jr., "Comment on "An Autopsy of Collective Security,"" Political Science Quarterly 90, no. 4. (Winter, 1975/1976): 715-717.

be confronted. For example, Rusk believed that China was attempting to promote its militant revolutionary ideology in South East Asia and was a driving force behind the Vietnam War. Just as Rusk sought to meet the threat posed by Khrushchev's wars of national liberation, he sought to keep China's perceived militant doctrine of political change from creating instability and undermining world peace. Such challenges required a response by the United States because it alone possessed the capability to meet the challenge unilaterally or as the leader of an alliance.

Rusk believed that the United States' foreign policy could support and maintain the stability and equilibrium of the international system. The United States would take the lead in supporting collective security and the UN charter by supporting the rule of law as a standard of international legitimacy and invoking collective security where peace was threatened. Rusk believed that the alternative to the stable system he was promoting would be a return to power politics. If stability was to be maintained states had to be discouraged from using military force to change the system or settle disputes. If the offending state understood that by its acts it was challenging the collective will, it would be deterred. The system was not perfect because it was susceptible to the problem of states identifying threats to collective security differently, but the system connected the stability of the international system to the system's principle of legitimacy.

Rusk's concept of **legitimacy** was adherence to the UN charter and the rule of law embodied therein. An example for understanding Rusk's approach to legitimacy can be seen in how he dealt with China's challenge to the system. China presented a threat to the UN world order because it was seeking to export a revolutionary doctrine throughout South East Asia.[462] If the UN world order was to be maintained and a general war to be avoided, the Chinese leadership had to be convinced that military aggression would not be rewarded.[463] Once China modified its revolutionary doctrine; then it would then be accepted within the UN world order. The goal was

[462]Rusk's concern with China's militancy reflects his reaction to the Korean War and thus his tenure as Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs in 1950. See Schoenbaum, Waging Peace, p. 230-233. The point was reinforced by Rusk's belief in Lin Piao's statement in Peking Review concerning the people's wars against United States imperialism. Lin Piao, "Long Live the Victory of People's War" Peking Review 8, no. 36 September 3, 1965.
[463] Cohen, Dean Rusk, p. 283. Stanley Hoffman argues that multilateral institutions like the United Nations contribute to moderating behaviour in the international system. See Stanley Hoffman "International Organizations and the International System," International Organization 24, no. 3 (Summer 1970): 389-413.

to modify the China's behaviour so that it accepted the moderate UN world order and abandoned its revolutionary international behaviour.

Rusk's approach to China and the Vietnam War contained a theoretical drawback because it ignored how China viewed the underlying balance of power in the region. Rusk spoke about respecting rules and modifying behaviour to meet a universal principle, but China was concerned that the United States was trying to change the balance of power within the region. It was concerned that the United States was trying to strengthen the anti-Communist states around China. In this regard, Rusk's pursuit of the principle went too far and destabilised the balance between power and principle necessary for equilibrium. This is not to say that the principle that he pursued or the world order he sought to create was wrong. Rather, the point is that the pursuit of the principle obscured the underlying balance of power concerns. China and the Soviet Union reacted to what they perceived as a threat and that reaction, in turn, increased the instability within the system.

The structural problem had its roots in how Rusk identified the United States' security with the security of the world order. Even though Rusk denied that the United States had any interest of imposing such an order beyond the borders of South Vietnam, the United States rhetoric and behaviour would appear to contradict his statements.[464] To the Soviet Union and China, the United States appeared to be imposing its conception of world order, rather than acting within the agreed upon system. The problem was compounded because Rusk's insistence on the rule of law and the UN world order threatened the Soviet Union and China's domestic structure. Even if Rusk insisted that the United States was only defending the UN world order in South Vietnam, the principles he was emphasising had an influence, even if indirect, on domestic structures. In stark contrast, Kissinger insisted that legitimacy refers solely to the international behaviour and the acceptance of the international order by all major powers.[465] Kissinger, in an essay published in 1968, went so far as to suggest that the central problem facing the international system was that it

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[464] Charles De Gaulle was worried about such designs when he spoke with Rusk concerning South Vietnam. See Lloyd Gardner, Pay Any Price: Lyndon Johnson and the Wars for Vietnam (Ivan R. Dee: Chicago, 1995), p. 155

[465] Henry Kissinger, A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the problems of peace 1812-22 (Houghton Mifflin Company: Boston, 1957), p. 1.

lacked such a concept of order. At a theoretical level, this statement is perhaps the starkest indicator of the failure of Rusk's concept of world order.[466]

Kissinger

In contrast to Rusk's universalistic worldview, Kissinger presented a **limited** world view. Whereas Rusk pursued a world view based upon the underlying principles of the UN charter, Kissinger focused on the more particular, and therefore limited, issue of power. Unlike ideas, power is limited in space and time and Kissinger's worldview reflected those limits by containing a sober assessment of the limits of the United States' power within a changed international system. For Kissinger, the United States attempt to promote collective security in South Vietnam was a dangerous illusion that had failed. The failure to uphold its vision of collective security had weakened its international position and distorted its international focus.[467] To correct this problem, Kissinger believed that a new concept of order had to be developed that focused on the changed balance of power among the great powers. The attempt to uphold the collective security world order had been beyond the United States' capabilities and this failure contributed to the instability in the international system by distracting the United States from the central strategic relationship.. To dampen the instability, Kissinger argued that a new international order was needed that focused on the changes in the central strategic relationship with the Soviet Union.

Two structural problems limited Kissinger's ability to create stability and equilibrium in the international system. The first was that the United States' power to influence the international system had been weakened by the Vietnam War. The second was that the international system had changed dramatically. The Soviet Union had emerged as a superpower rival and Germany and Japan had emerged as economic rivals. Kissinger concluded that stability and equilibrium could only be developed in the international system if the great powers accepted a framework of international order that respected the preceding structural changes. Kissinger attempted to build such an international order upon the low, but solid, foundation of power. He sought to replace the failed attempt to found the order on the principles of the UN charter with a more "realistic" policy.

[466] Henry A. Kissinger, "Central Issues of American foreign policy" in Agenda for the Nation Kermit Gordon, ed. (The Brookings Institution: Washington D.C. 1968), p. 588.
[467] Ibid.

Rusk's attempt and failure to build this order had created an imbalance between the power and the principle that forms the political equilibrium within the international system. Kissinger's main task was to redress the changes in power by bringing the Soviet Union and China into the international system. This could be accomplished by introducing a concept of legitimacy based upon international stability rather than an adherence to abstract principles. Perhaps the main difference in worldviews from Rusk to Kissinger was that one saw the world order through the filter of universal principles while the other saw the world order through the filter of power.

Kissinger's filter helped him organise his geopolitical vision. Like Kennan before him, Kissinger tried to develop a limited geopolitical strategy to balance United States' commitments and capabilities.[468] Kissinger accepted that the United States' power to shape the world was limited and his geopolitical vision reflected this awareness. The United States had to focus on shaping a global equilibrium that, by including the Soviet Union and China, would develop stability in the international system.[469] The task required a new approach to world politics in that United States could no longer indulge the belief that it could or should reform the world. Rusk had pursued a policy that expressed a deep faith, a liberal faith, in progress and in the ability of an international institution like the UN to reform the world. The search for equilibrium could not indulge such a belief as the basis for global order and Kissinger argued that the belief in progress had contributed to the United States' involvement and failure in Vietnam.[470] Kissinger was not interested in the UN as a guide to creating a new world order or for setting priorities in the international system. He was concerned with the military relationship between the United Sates and the Soviet Union and the emerging triangular relationship between those two powers and China. Even though Kissinger spoke eloquently about his desire to build a world order that would meet the ideals represented by UN, he understood that it could not be achieved unless the international system was stable and based on an equilibrium of power.[471]

As mentioned above, Kissinger believed that stability developed from a global equilibrium. The equilibrium would be based upon a shared concept of legitimacy regarding the

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[468] See FRUS 1948 Vol. 1 pp. 509-528.
[469] Henry Kissinger, White House Years (Little Brown and Co.: Boston, 1979) p. 192
[470] Kissinger, "Central Issues", p. 612.
[471] Kissinger's first and last speeches as Secretary of State were to the UN. See DOSB 15 October 1973, pp. 469-473 and 25 October 1976, pp. 497- 510.

international order. Developing stability in the international system was hindered by the changes in the United States and the international system. The Vietnam War had weakened the United States both physically and psychologically. The main problem appeared to be psychological because the United States remained powerful but now seemed unable or unwilling to engage its power to achieve the necessary ends. To counter this problem, Kissinger had to develop a domestic consensus on foreign policy beyond the need to leave Vietnam.[472]

Just as the United States' domestic consensus had changed, the international system had changed as well. While the United States remained a powerful country, it was no longer the sole superpower. In the military arena, the Soviet Union possessed the strategic nuclear capability to challenge the United States. In the economic arena, Japan and Germany were now economic rivals to the United States. If the United States was to develop equilibrium in the international system and created stability, it would have to take account of these changes. This task would succeed to the extent that the Nixon Strategy, which combined détente and the Nixon Doctrine, worked.[473] In large part, the Nixon Strategy relied upon being able to bring the Soviet Union into the international system and re-balancing the United States' commitments and capabilities. A key mechanism was the triangular relationship between the United States, the Soviet Union, and China. A central goal of Nixon Strategy was to develop a relationship with China that would give the United States the freedom of action to encourage the Soviet Union to engage in détente. Détente was further reinforced by the program of linkage whereby behaviour in one diplomatic area was linked to behaviour in others.

As Secretary of State, Kissinger followed the foreign policy outline that he had helped to develop during Nixon's first term. The stable structure of peace had been developed, but the initial successes had to be followed up if the system was to avoid reverting back into instability. Nixon and Kissinger had restrained the revolutionary states such as the Soviet Union and China by bringing them into the world system. This task was accomplished by ending the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War and recognising China, thereby bringing them into the

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472 Walter Lafeber, "Kissinger and Acheson: The Secretary of State and the Cold War," Political Science Quarterly 92, no. 2. (Summer 1977): pp. 194-195.
473 Robert Osgood in Retreat from Empire used the term Nixon Strategy to show how the policy of détente and the Nixon Doctrine worked together.

international system. The dual accomplishments gave the United States a measure of flexibility in dealing with the Soviet Union. Rather than taking the lead in imposing a world order, the United States would seek to build the new stability upon the underlying balance of power with its largest geopolitical and ideological rivals. Nixon and Kissinger were aware that by withdrawing from Vietnam they altered the balance of power in South East Asia and between China and the Soviet Union. In the former, the withdrawal signalled the end of a direct challenge to China. This enabled China and the United States to work together. In the latter, it helped China to improve its strategic position against the Soviet Union who it perceived to be the greater threat.[474] Coral Bell suggested that each state pursued détente as a strategy to fulfil their strategic goals. By ending America's involvement in the Vietnam war, Kissinger and Nixon laid the basis for accomplishing what Rusk was unable to do with his insistence upon the UN world order: bring China into the international system and end the Vietnam War. Nixon and Kissinger embraced China on the basis of power, rather than principle. In doing so, they pulled back from the over-commitment to principle and reasserted the importance of power.

Even as Kissinger propounded a world order based on a balance of power, he also understood that a balance of power alone could not bring stability. Equilibrium in the system required a balance between power and the legitimising principle.[475] **Legitimacy** would be based upon the mutual support for the emerging stable structure of peace. Unlike Rusk's insistence upon the UN world order as the basis for legitimacy, Kissinger focused on international behaviour and therefore avoided any reference to the domestic structure. States could be considered legitimate so long as they contributed to the stability of the international system. The goal was not to modify the behaviour of other states to meet a universal principle. The goal was to have states agree to support stability. In particular, Kissinger sought avoid the problem that had plagued Rusk's reliance on collective security--states interpreting threats differently. On the surface, one could see a distinct difference between Rusk and Kissinger's formulation of legitimacy, but Kissinger's view still suffered from a problem similar to the one Rusk confronted. States could differ in how they interpreted stabilising or destabilising behaviour. Differences over stability developed in the

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[474] See Bell, Diplomacy of Detente, p.5.
[475] See Kissinger, A World Restored, and Schroeder, "Vienna Settlement," pp. 695-697.

periphery as states sought to achieve an advantage.[476] By giving the Soviet Union a stake in the international system, the policy of détente and linkage was designed to encourage moderate behaviour. States would benefit from co-operating and contributing to stability. If linkage worked as designed, behaviour that did not contribute to stability would be punished. Underlying this system would be the awareness that no state possessed the power to change the system unilaterally. A key difference between Rusk and Kissinger's views on legitimacy was that Rusk's legitimacy was based upon an abstract standard of international law and the world community. Kissinger based his concept of legitimacy on the reciprocal relationship between the great powers.

In Rusk's system no state could gain an advantage beyond that offered by the abstract standard of international law. In Kissinger's system, changes between the great powers in the era of détente would have an immediate and reciprocal effect. In other words, détente and linkage could be played to the Soviet Union's advantage and the United States' disadvantage. Rusk's international order could not be susceptible to such manipulation because it was based upon an apparently neutral and agreed upon standard. Although Kissinger was at pains to argue against the possible gains the Soviet Union could make at the expense of the United States, critics of détente stressed this potential liability. [477] In particular, Kissinger argued that whatever gains the Soviet Union might achieve they would be less than the gains achieved by the West. Bringing the Soviet Union into the international system would moderate its international behaviour because it now had a stake in the system. In other words marginal cheating could be accepted so long as it did not challenge the overall structure because what was important was the structure. However, Kissinger was also at pains to point out that if the Soviet Union sought to overthrow the structure through cheating then the West would, of course, counter such behaviour.

A key theme for any international system and its stability is how well it deals with change. Rusk was concerned that change occur peacefully and in accordance with the international norms. Kissinger focused on stability and thus his concern for change was seen through the filter of how it might influence the central great power relationship. Rusk warned

[476] Robert S. Litwak, Détente and the Nixon Doctrine: American foreign policy and the pursuit of stability, 1969-1976 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 116.
[477] See Richard C. Thornton, The Nixon-Kissinger Years: Reshaping of America's Foreign Policy (New York: Paragon House, 1989).

about change in the periphery when he justified the United States' commitment to a world order based upon collective security. Kissinger echoed the concern in a different context when he dealt with change in the peripheral balance of power that could lead to changes in the central balance of power.[478] Kissinger developed a strategy for stability based upon the limits of the United States' power, but it required him to be even more vigilant lest a regional change create a change at the centre. Unlike the international standard of collective security against aggression, Kissinger's principles of stability and legitimacy were less clear cut. When did a change in the periphery signal a challenge to the central balance? The structure for a stable peace while based upon a more solid foundation of power was also more tenuous because it was susceptible to technological changes that could alter the balance of military power. The system required a constant monitoring and the need to be prepared for interventions to uphold the balance whenever and wherever it was threatened.[479]

Kissinger's worldview, like Rusk's, was consistent from its foundation. Stability and legitimacy were based upon the balance of power within the system. The competing states would practice self-restraint because they realised they could not change the system through military means and they benefited from the system. Legitimacy would be based upon how the international behaviour of the states contributed to international stability. If states continued to attempt to alter the balance of power and thereby destabilised the system, then their behaviour would be considered illegitimate. States would be discouraged from that behaviour because any challenge to stability would be countered. Through the principle of legitimacy and the desire for the benefits from stability, states would have a stake in keeping the system stable. The inherent limits to power would encourage the states to practice self-restraint and this would form the basis for the order Kissinger wanted to develop. In contrast to Rusk's world view which was based upon a belief that the United States should be committed to upholding the UN charter, Kissinger's world view was based upon the limits to the United States' power. Instead of a UN world order, the world order Kissinger envisaged would require less of the United States' power to maintain. Their worldviews also reflected how they viewed the United States--the subject of the next section.

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478 Rusk mentioned this concern in a press conference. See DOSB 22 May 1961, p. 763. On Kissinger's concern see Sloan, Geopolitics, p. 175-181.
479 Sloan, Geopolitics, p. 181.

Section 2 View of the United States

The differences between Rusk and Kissinger's worldviews reflect, in part, how they viewed the United States. Rusk viewed the United States from a traditional post-World War Two stand point where the United States, confident in its liberalism and its promise, helped to found and shape the post-war world order. The contrast with Kissinger's view is stark. Kissinger viewed the United States as a country that had lost its confidence, its belief in its exceptionalism, its economic prosperity and its political certainty. In sum, Kissinger's United States faces an uncertain future in an international system that is no longer perceives to be benign or pliant to the United States' power.

Rusk.

The United States' founding principles can be seen as the filter through which Dean Rusk viewed the United States. As Warren Cohen argued, Rusk's view was based upon liberal exceptionalism.[480] The United States was exceptional because its founding principles and its political institutions were testament to the promise of self-government. An effective and lasting government could be created on the basis of consent rather than force or fraud. These principles contained a universal promise and offered hope to the rest of the world. For example, <u>The Declaration of Independence</u> declares that its principles apply to all men. If one views the United States as an exceptional nation, this has the effect of dividing the world. The United States as the exception, represents the New World, while Europe represents the Old World. The view that the United States was exceptional helped to foster the belief that it had a mission to bring its promise to the world. The Puritans were aware that America's power and principles could be a temptation to launch a crusade and the potential to misuse these principles.[481] The temptation was at its greatest after World War Two, when the United States was at the height of its relative power. Rusk

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[480] Cohen, <u>Dean Rusk</u>, p. 133. See Ernest Lee Tuveson, <u>Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millenial Role</u> (London: University of Chicago Press: 1968); Anders Stephanson, <u>Manifest Destiny : American Expansionism and the Empire of Right</u> (New York: Hill & Wang, 1996), see also Albert K. Weinberg, <u>Manifest Destiny: a study of nationalist expansionism in American history</u> (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1963).
[481]Bercovitch, <u>American Jeremiad</u>, p. 25. "The American Puritan jeremiads seeks (in effect) to prevent these excesses [antinomianism and self interest created by unfettered individualism] by turning liminallity itself into a mode of socialization."

did not believed that the United States would succumb to the temptation of power.[482] His vision of the United States' promise and benevolence reflects a belief in progress away from the fallen nature of the Old World. The belief in the promise and the benevolence of the United States reflected a strong streak of optimism.

Optimism is a strong theme in Rusk's speeches and how he viewed the United States.[483] Since the Puritans, this was a strong theme running through the history of American rhetoric. The belief that the United States was a redeemer or reformer nation was based on an optimistic belief in the progress of mankind. As Ernest L. Tuveson pointed out,

> Yet, beginning over three centuries ago a movement among a larger segment of Protestants effected a reversal of this dark belief. [The belief that to attempt by mankind to improve the world was the height of pride.] There sprang up a hope, what might be called a" Christian optimism" about the future of humanity and human society." [484]

Dean Rusk's outlook may have been influenced by his Protestant upbringing, but his belief in the United States was based on more than religion. The optimism was derived from a belief in the United States' political principles and political institutions.[485] The optimism in the United States' promise and principles helped to justify the involvement in Vietnam and to sustain the commitment. European critics would suggest that the United States' involvement in Vietnam was the result of naive optimism.[486] To critics, it appeared that the United States misunderstood the complexity of the world because the attempt to reform the world on high sounding principles that were empty of meaning for non-Americans. For example, De Gaulle warned that things were different in Vietnam and that even the Communism was different.[487]

On the contrast between European pessimism and Rusk's attachment to optimism, we can see another contrast with Kissinger's view of the United States. In several speeches and statements, Kissinger observed that the United States lacked a sense of tragedy.[488] The United States, unlike the European states, was not familiar with the tragedies and disillusionment that resulted from the

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[482] See DOSB 9 March 1964, p.361.
[483]See Khong, Yeun Foong Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and The Vietnam Decisions of 1965 (Princeton University Press: Princeton New Jersey, 1992), p. 45. See also FRUS January February 1964-1968 Vol. II Vietnam January-June 1965 pp. 95-97.
[484] Ernest Lee Tuveson, Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millenial role (London: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p.1.
[485]See Cohen, Dean Rusk, pp. 321-330.
[486] See for example Graham Greene, The Quiet American (London: Bodley Head, 1973)
[487]See Gardner, Pay Any Price, p. 155.
[488]See for example DOSB 17 February 1975, p. 197.

exercise of power in the international system. In Vietnam the United States was now suffering its first dose of tragedy and disillusionment. The tragedy of Vietnam demonstrated the limits to the United States ability to change the world.[489] We can see how Kissinger's view on the possibility of progress differed from Rusk's because Kissinger did not possess the same optimism in the United States' ability to improve the world. Rusk's optimism regarding the United States supported his belief in the possibility of progress in mankind. By contrast, Kissinger's conceived of progress and even the United States in terms of the conquest of nature and the mastery over one's future.[490]

Rusk viewed the United States as a country that offered the example to the rest of the world but not simply through an unbounded mastery of nature. The example, in part, was the possibility of **progress,** as exemplified in the rule of law. Rusk made a point of arguing that the rule of law was man's attempt to progress away from the law of the jungle. Mankind faced a constant struggle in trying to rise above barbarism and live according to the rule of law and to the extent that the rule of law existed, man had achieved progress. This progress would be enshrined in liberal institutions. The government, as an institution, could contribute to a better life through the rational application of government resources. Lyndon Johnson was a strong believer in the power of the government to improve the lot of the average citizen and the Great Society policies were a testament to this belief. Rusk shared Johnson's belief in the government's power to help the average citizen, but Kissinger in contrast did not share the optimistic belief in the potential for progress. According to Dickson, Kissinger could not believe in the progress of mankind, universal moral principles and eternal values after seeing the horrors of Auschwitz.[491] The horrors of the death camps certainly cemented Kissinger's view of human nature, but his opposition to progress was philosophical as well as empirical. The potential for progress was in man's mastery over nature, but not necessarily mastery over human nature. As a result, the problems in the

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[489] The theme of limits runs through Kissinger speeches although the theme occurs less in 1976 when it turns more towards building confidence. See for example, DOSB 29 October 1973, p. 525; 11 November 1974 p. 643; 16 September 1974, p.373; 4 August 1975, p. 167. On the confidence issue, this is another theme that runs through Kissinger's speeches and statements. see DOSB 10 May 1976, pp. 597- 603; 1 March 1976, p. 253.12 April 1976, p. 489.
[490] See DOSB 5 May 1976, p. 563.
[491] Peter Dickson, Kissinger and the Meaning of History (London: Cambridge University Press, 1978) p.8. Even though Kissinger challenges this view in the final pages of Years of Renewal, his focus there and as a policy maker was upon the distinction between what an individual might believe and pursue and what a statesman or policymaker, responsible for the survival of a state, might believe and pursue in the international arena.

international system could never be solved, only alleviated. Mankind had to be continually on guard and constantly innovating to face this danger.

Perhaps the strongest theme within Rusk's view of the United States was that it represented a great revolutionary experiment in liberty. The United States' great experiment in freedom was an example to other states. Kissinger understood the limits to the United States' power and this meant that the most that could be achieved was to conserve freedom where it existed. Rusk believed that the United States should promote liberty and freedom actively in the international system. He focused on the United States' ideology and its founding as the basis for extending liberty to the world. The United States supported the UN charter to expand freedom's orbit. As a result, the United States encouraged de-colonisation and self-determination because they promoted freedom

Kissinger.

Kissinger's background and the problems he confronted as Secretary of State shaped his view of the United States. He believed that the problems were created by the structure of the international system. The United States' commitment to Vietnam and a globalist foreign policy had eroded its relative position in the international system because it had been distracted from the international system' central issues with a war on the periphery. Kissinger realised that the United States had been psychologically scarred by the failure in Vietnam. Despite the rhetoric, the United States, the world's most powerful country, had been unable to win in Vietnam. The defeat discredited the foreign policy philosophy of undifferentiated globalism, which had led the United States into Vietnam. In the aftermath, policymakers had to adjust their policies to reflect the changes in the United States and in the international system.

Kissinger confronted the problem of designing a policy that took into account the relative decline in the United States' position and the instability in the international system. The problem was not one of absolute decline, but of a relative decline. The public and policy makers had to adjust their thinking to an age of limits. The United States would have to make do with less. Seen through the filter of power and the perception of power, the United States was facing difficult future. The task facing Nixon and Kissinger was more psychological than physical because the

failure in Vietnam had damaged the United States belief in its world role and by extension its identity. The confidence and hope prevalent in the early 1960s had disappeared and in their place uncertainty and foreboding over the future dominated the national psyche.[492] The United States had lost some physical strength in Vietnam, but the failure had a greater psychological impact. The economic and military deficiencies could be remedied, but the psychological strength would be harder to restore. The Vietnam War wounded the American psyche. Kissinger believed that the United States' self-confidence and its confidence in its world role had to be restored. To this end he sought to encourage the United States to accept its relative limits within a changed international system. It would have to apply its limited power to its foremost priorities: domestic order and international survival. Kissinger's view of the United States was shaped by the danger of international instability and the problems created by the limits to the United States' power to restrain that instability.

Kissinger viewed the United States through the lens of its limited power. This did not mean that United States was unable to fulfil its international promises. It had to act conservatively to protect the pockets of freedom in the world rather than trying to expand them. Security and Order were the foundations for Kissinger's vision of the United States. Kissinger, influenced by the rise of Nazi tyranny in Germany, understood the fearful consequences that follow from the failure to maintain order at home or abroad. If the necessities of order and security were not maintained, then the promises of prosperity and justice would never be obtained.[493] He did not give up on these ideals, but diminished capabilities required the United States to face the grim task of reordering preferences to adapt to the changing world. Thus, by necessity and philosophical predilection, the policies Kissinger advocated were conservative.

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492 See Henry Brandon, The retreat of American power (London: Bodley Head, 1973). Brandon offers a good overview of the political, economic, and social situation faced by Nixon and Kissinger at the inauguration. On the matter of America's psyche see Daniel Bell, The End of American Exceptionalism, The Public Interest, 41 (1975/1976): 193-224 and Veysey, "Autonomy", p. 458.

493 Kissinger disavows such a stark dichotomy in the last volume of his memoirs, Years of Renewal, when he says that justice and order have to work together. This reflects his views on equilibrium, but Kissinger would be the first to admit that the promises of justice and morality could never be fulfilled unless the certainties of power were understood. Kissinger understood that legitimacy and power had to be balanced, but his writings emphasised the fundamental importance of power. He saw the relationship through the prism of power even as he sought to promote legitimacy. See Kissinger, Years of Renewal, pp. 1078-1079.

Kissinger's policies were conservative politically and philosophically. The United States had to pursue policies that reflected the changes within it and the world. Unlike Rusk's pursuit of universal principles , Kissinger had to be circumscribed in his approach to foreign policy. The United States' economic, political and military weakness and the emergence of the Soviet Union as a great power limited the United States' freedom of action. To exploit that limited freedom of action, the United States had to innovate and constantly manage the international system through a variety of "masterful" moves. The United States could not rely upon the institutions it had built during its period of preponderance. Kissinger started from an age of instability and weakness which meant that the goals were more modest and more limited. Even as he attempted to build a conceptually ambitious structure of peace, the limits of power meant that he could only achieve the more moderate ends that would contribute to the foundation. The pursuit of these moderate goals did not preclude using immoderate means to demonstrate that the United States, although weakened, was not helpless. An example would be the response to the *Mayaguez* crisis.[494]

At a philosophical level, Kissinger's foreign policy was conservative because it was based upon the belief that progress in international affairs was not possible. Improvements may be made, but the fundamental problems could not be solved and mankind could not make progress. Kissinger, in Agenda for the Nation, criticised United States foreign policy for possessing a belief in progress. He argued that the United States placed too much belief in progress and the viability of its remedies.[495] What was needed was creativity within foreign policy but with the understanding that it could not transcend the constraints of human nature. The statesman must be concerned only with what can be achieved in the present. Survival becomes the dominant priority over any attempt to reform the international system according to an ideal of justice. The conservative philosophy of foreign policy reflected Kissinger's views on the international system and the strategic situation that the United States faced. The strategic situation was quite different from the one that Rusk faced. In a sense, Rusk's foreign policy reflected a country that possessed

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[494] The *Mayaguez* crisis reflected Kissinger's concern that the United States demonstrate its capability for action after the debacle of Vietnam. See Richard G. Head, Frisco W. Short, and Robert C. McFarlane, Crisis Resolution: Presidential Decision Making in the *Mayaguez* and Korean Confrontations (Boulder: Westview Press, 1978), pp. 101-148.

[495] Kissinger, "Central Issues", p. 612.

great advantages over its rivals and allies. By contrast, Kissinger saw the United States as a "normal country".

A "normal country" refers to the loss of exceptionalism as a principle within the United States foreign policy. Kissinger understood that the United States shared the same problems as the other countries and that its power and position did not allow it to avoid the problems besieging other countries. In particular, the United States, as a result of the Vietnam War, had experienced the sense of tragedy that other countries had suffered. It had not escaped the "sins" associated with the exercise of power. The taint of power politics that had haunted European statecraft, and which the United States had forsworn, was now attached to it by the failed effort in Vietnam. The foreign policy of globalism had led the United States to involve its power and prestige in a sordid war where no apparent national interest, save its prestige, could be found.[496] Although arguments could be made that the United States was acting for the highest purposes, Americans had difficulty in reconciling their belief in country's principles to the methods and goals pursued in Vietnam. The war had brought the sins of the Old World, power politics and quasi-imperialistic goals, to the shores of the New World. For Kissinger, the Vietnam War ended the old world-new world dichotomy because America now shared the same sense of tragedy as the Old World.[497]

At a more practical and less metaphysical level, the changes in the international economy had further emphasised that the United States was now an ordinary country. The economic interdependence of the Western economies meant that the economic dislocations created by the energy crisis affected the United States just as it affected Europe. While the effect was less severe in the United States, the underlying reality of economic interdependence meant that the United States could not avoid or forestall the economic storms buffeting other economies. In a related area, the economic problems created by the Vietnam War undermined the United States' financial position. As a result of the domestic economic problems and the problems in the international monetary system, the United States was forced to close the gold window and devalue the dollar. Even though the move was demanded by the inflexibility of the monetary system and its inability to

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[496] As Thucydides pointed out, prestige or honour, can be a motive for war, but critics seemed content to dismiss Rusk's claims concerning the threats to the United States' credibility.
[497] See for example DOSB 17 February 1975, p. 197. Where Kissinger says that the United States had never experienced tragedy. Kissinger reiterated this them but noted that except for the Civil War, the United States had escaped tragedy. See DOSB 12 April 1976, p. 482.

deal with the rapid economic changes taking place, the move had a psychological impact. It signalled the end of the primacy of the United States economy. The once mighty dollar had devalued just as other currencies had to devalue when faced with economic demands of the international system.

The changes outlined above suggested to Kissinger that the United States was facing a difficult future. The United States had to confront limits to its power. The international system had changed dramatically with the emergence of the Soviet Union as a great power. At one point, Kissinger worried that the changes signalled the crisis of western civilisation as outlined in Spengler's The Decline and Fall of the West. In this vein, Kissinger saw his role as one in which he had to play for time against the impending problems created by the United States weakness and the changed world. In contrast, Rusk seemed to emphasis that time was on the United States side even if the situation looked bleak.[498] Kissinger understood that he could not turn back the clock to where the United States was confident of its power and powerful enough to shape the international system. Instead, he realised, as did Nixon, that he had to make the best of a bad situation. Kissinger had to find a way to restore the United States' confidence, even in an age of diminished expectations, and develop an international structure that would reflect those limitations without creating further problems.[499]

There is a stark contrast between Rusk and Kissinger regarding the future of the United States. Whereas Rusk possesses an optimism and confidence in the United States institutions and power, Kissinger confronted a bleaker situation for the United States. The United States was internationally weakened by the Vietnam War and suffering a crisis of confidence while domestically the government, weakened by the Watergate scandal, suffered from a crisis of

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[498] See for example, Khong, Analogies, p. 45. An interesting avenue for future research would be to compare how Rusk and Kissinger viewed time. Rusk's training in the CBI theatre of World War Two would give him a view of the war and such efforts as successful in the long term or a secondary, but necessary, theatre to be used if the main theatre stalled. Thus, one could say that time was on the United States' side. In contrast, Kissinger seems to act as if time is not on the United States side and that his policies were designed to buy time to deal with diminished capabilities.

[499] Henry Kissinger, Years of Upheaval (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982), pp. 122-127. Even though Kissinger is speaking here of the effect of Watergate on foreign policy, he could easily be speaking of a the United States in the post-Vietnam War phase. See White House Years, pp. 54-72 and 195-311 for an assessment of the psychological needs of the United States as the Vietnam War wound down.

presidential authority. Rusk pursues a decent world order led by a United States confident of its purpose and its power. Kissinger attempts to sustain a United States teetering on the brink of internal paralysis and facing an uncertain international role. The different visions of the United States reflected their different views of its' role in the world, the subject of the next section.

Section 3. The United States role in the world.

How Rusk and Kissinger viewed the United States' role in the world was a product of how they viewed the international system and how they viewed the United States. For example, Rusk's liturgical view of the United States combines with his emphasis on principle in the international system to suggest that the United States must promote a world order. Rusk understood the goals of the United States' foreign policy bound up with the principles in the first two articles of the UN charter. The United States had to use its power and prosperity to build a decent world order and defend that world order wherever it was threatened. In contrast, Kissinger's view of the United States could be characterised as reflecting the jeremiad mode of American rhetoric. He criticised the United States' excesses in foreign policy and emphasised the role of power in the international system to suggest that it confront the limits to its power. A weakened United States required that the order, previously built upon its preponderance, had to be reassessed. To create stability, the United States had to build a new order that took into account the other emerging power centres. The attempt to create a decent world order had sapped the United States' strength. In an age of diminished expectations, the United States would have to reorder its foreign policy priorities accordingly. Kissinger understood the goals of the United States foreign policy to be guided by more limited, but more attainable, goals of equilibrium and stability.

Rusk's view of the United States' role in the world.

Rusk understood that the United States had direct involvement in reforming the world to create a decent world order. The United States, blessed by its abundant power and democratic institutions, had to use those blessings to make the world a better place by fighting the forces of coercion wherever they threatened the international system. The pursuit of principle would have positive and negative roles. The positive role was to create a decent world order based upon the

rule of law. The negative role was to rally collective action against the forces that might threaten the decent world order and its principles. In carrying out this role, the United States relied on its power to defend the system and relied on its principles to act as an example for other countries. The United States success at having a free government based upon consent and the rule of law demonstrated its' regime was an effective alternative to regimes based upon the rule of force. A strong government and a strong economy helped the United States act as a symbol of political hope and economic development.

Rusk believed that without the United States' involvement an international system based on the UN charter might repeat the failure of the League of Nations. That failure and the horrors of World War Two had convinced Rusk and many others that the United States had to take a direct role in making collective security work. Rusk worried that without a commitment to collective security it would be hard to stop regional violence from spiralling into a general war. He combined belief in collective security and in an active international role for the United States when he declared that the foreign policy goals could be found in the first two articles of the UN Charter. The United States' involvement and leadership would take many forms: military, economic, political, social.

The United States was actively involved in several military and political treaties. The first treaty was the United States commitment to the UN. The charter represented, for Rusk, a decent world order. Moreover, it was based upon the idea of collective security, a security structure that Rusk deemed vital to the continuity security of the world order and the United States. The United States, as a powerful country promoting the principles of the rule of law, had to take the lead in creating the political and military alliances. The United States would use its power and prestige to help other countries defend themselves. The treaties demonstrated the United States' commitment to its allies and to defending the peace and stability of the world order. In this regard, the United States was using its power and promise to promote a principled international system and to promote freedom based upon the rule of law.

The United State combined its political and military leadership with leadership in the international trade and monetary systems. With the largest economy in the world, it had an important role in maintaining world trade and encouraging economic development. The former

reflected the United States' powerful economy, but by the middle of the 1960s, the post-World War Two economic advantage had been eroded. In the latter point, the United States promoted economic development overseas. The United States encouraged economic development for several reasons. First, the economic development reflected a belief that free trade and a market economy were the best way to develop an economy and improve the quality of life for the people. Second, the United States' economic model of development offered a counter example to the economic model being developed by the Soviet Union. Thus, the United States promoted its economic model as an example of its own success and as an alternative to the Communist model of economic development.

These roles and Rusk's belief in the power and principles of the United States reflect a confidence in the United States' ability to reform the world and create a decent world order. This outlook was based on the belief in the United States, but also an awareness that there was no one else who could carry the burden. The Vietnam War, which represented a world-wide conflict between Communism and Liberal Democracy, challenged the decent world order Rusk sought to build. If the decent world order was to survive this test, the United States had to take the lead in defending it. To justify this involvement, Rusk went so far as to identify the security of South Vietnam with the security of the United States. In doing so, the United States' involvement was justified by acting on behalf of the world community.[500] The world community did not see its interests threatened by the conflict in South Vietnam. Thus, the United States believed that it was acting on behalf of the international community. The United States justified its involvement by identifying its security with the security of the world order. That decision exemplified how Rusk merged his view of the world and his view of the United States to form the United States role in the world: defending and maintaining the decent world order.

Kissinger's view of the United States' role in the world.

Kissinger, in contrast to Rusk, understood the United States' role in the world to be limited. The United States had reached the limits of its power in South Vietnam, but this awareness, while

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[500] Wolfgang Friedman, "United States Policy and the Crisis of International Law: some reflections on the state of International Law in "International Co-Operation Year,"" American Journal of International Law 59 no. 4 (Oct. 1965): 866.

important, was not the full picture. The international system had changed while the United States attempted to create a decent world order in South Vietnam. The changes in the international system, the rise of the Soviet Union and the diffusion of economic and political power, were structural and far-reaching. The magnitude of these changes was increased by the United States' weakness. Its foreign policy was as much a reaction to the international structural changes as to the domestic changes. The old international system was being transformed by the decline of a principal actor. The emerging international system was based upon a diffusion of political and economic power. These changes had created instability in the international system. The order based upon the United States' strength was giving way to a new order. The main task for the United States was to manage and contain the instability to avoid a general war and avoid a further erosion in the United States' position. Kissinger faced the task of keeping the United States engaged in the international system on the basis of its limited power. At the same time, he was trying to reassure the public that, in the age of diminished expectations, the United States still could contribute to the international system.

The changes in the system demonstrated the United States' relative weakness, but the system still required it to take an active role. The Vietnam War weakened the United States. The changes in the international system exposed that weakness. Both of these problems, even the latter, were self-inflicted. The United States had become relatively weaker because it had devoted its energies, domestic and international, to developing and defending a decent world order in South Vietnam. Thus, if the cause of this misadventure could be removed, it could put its international problems in order. The main domestic task for the United States' international role was to recognise and work within the limits of its' power. At the same time, the international role required that the United States maintain a high level of engagement to ensure that the emerging international system could be shaped to its' interests.

Kissinger faced two tasks in maintaining the United States' active international role. The first to educate the confused and uncertain public that in the age of limited power the United States still had an important international role. The second to encourage allies and warn enemies. The United States was relatively weaker, but it would continue to uphold its commitments and act to protect its international interests. The first task was accomplished, in part, by attempting to change

the foreign policy philosophy away from the liberal internationalism that had led the United States to overstep the limits of its power. It would pursue a more pragmatic policy guided by a philosophy that did not recognise the United States' exceptionalism. A United States inebriated by that belief had engaged in an open-ended commitment to South Vietnam. The resulting failure required a change. The United States would not be pursuing goals like Rusk's open ended goal of a decent world order, but the United States would seek the more limited goal. It was not seeking to redeem the world, but now faced the more limited and immediate goal: survival. The confidence that seemed to define the early 1960s had been replaced by a wary pessimism built upon the awareness that the promise had its limit.

The second task, reassuring allies, was necessary for two reasons. The first was that the United States was now weaker and could not carry the burden it had previously carried for its allies. The second was that the strategy that Nixon and Kissinger pursued to bring stability to the international system, détente, required the allies to carry a greater responsibility for the international system. The difference between the two demands was that the former reflected the United States' weakness while the second reflected its continued geopolitical importance. The geopolitical demands on the United States forced it to recognise and make a strategic partnership with China. The recognition of China demonstrates the changes from the Rusk to Kissinger era and the changes in the United States international position. China agreed to work with the United States for its own strategic reasons, but it also demonstrated that the United States now needed help in dealing with the Soviet Union. This is not to say that the China and the United States had a relationship that could be equated with the United States-Western European alliance. It is to point out that the relationships were based upon the United States' weakness.

The United States was too weak to attempt to defend a decent world order and undertake open-ended commitments. It had learned the limits of its power. The limits to power shaped Kissinger's view of the United States international role. The changes in the international system were, in part, a reaction to its failure to build that decent world order. The Soviet Union had reached strategic parity while the United States was pursuing a decent world order in South Vietnam. Economic rivals had increased their strength while the United States was spending resources on the war and undergoing massive domestic reforms. Limited power meant that the

United States had to create a new structure of peace to restrain the Soviet Union's ability to create instability. It meant that the United States' allies would have to take a greater responsibility for supporting the new structure of peace.

The changes in the international system reflected a changed United States. To develop a new structure of peace, it had to take a leading role. The difference was that the United States was not in a position to define the system because it was no longer preponderant. Instead, Nixon and Kissinger would have to manipulate, manage, and massage, the emerging international order to defend and promote the United States' interests. The United States did not identify itself with the system, but acted within the system. To put it directly, the belief in exceptionalism would be limited to domestic consumption rather than being a basis for its foreign policy. The United States was compelled to do this because it could not sustain a foreign policy driven by such beliefs. As a super power acutely aware of the material and psychological limits to its power, it had to undertake a complex task of retrenching its position even as it sustained its previous commitments. In part, the more stable structure of peace was based upon the United States self-imposed and structurally designed self-restraint.

The United States would maintain its leadership position, because it could not abdicate its commitments. The world order was changing. The old international order was giving way to something new. The world was disordered and uncertainty, but from that disorder the United States had an opportunity to create a new order. Kissinger understood that it had to have an active role in the world if it was to maintain world peace. The United States and her allies were the key to maintaining a global equilibrium.[501] If a stable structure of peace, based upon equilibrium, was to be created the United States had to seize the chance. The emerging international system would require the United States to continue its leadership role, but modify it by stressing its Co-Operation with its allies. The Nixon Strategy expected the allies to carry a larger share of the defence burden and the burden of maintaining the international order. A key difficulty was that the United States was not always willing to back its words with deeds. It was one thing to recommend that the allies take a more independent role to give the United States freedom of action to negotiate with the

[501]DOSB 12 April 1976, p. 483.

Soviet Union and it was another to accept their independent policies. The tension between these two demands was a constant problem for Nixon and Kissinger.

The changes in the United States and the international system required it to reassess its international role. Its' new international role reflected the decreased ability to shape and manage the international system. The United States was not without resources, but a key element, its self-confidence and purpose, had been weakened. To fill this gap and to keep the changes in the international system from damaging the United States' interests, Nixon and Kissinger charted a more limited, if still ambition, international role. If the United States was no longer powerful enough to identify itself with the system, it was still sufficiently powerful and geopolitically important to take the lead in managing its emerging structure. Kissinger saw the task of the United States to find a role that reflected the limits of power but also reflected its' continuing primacy in the international system. It might not take the lead in creating a decent world order, but the United States would take the lead in managing the emerging world order.

Chapter Six: Conclusion.

The foreign policy philosophy guiding the United States changed between Rusk and Kissinger because of the Vietnam War. In Vietnam, the United States confronted the philosophical question--Republic or Empire? The question embodies the near Machiavellian Moment that the United States faced. This thesis has found that the Machiavellian Moment revealed a series of imbalances within the American regime created by the United States' commitment to a decent UN World Order threatened in South Vietnam. The first imbalance was between the United States foreign policy and the international system. Although the United States saw the Vietnam War as a threat to the UN world order, the other states in the system did not share this view. This development reflected the changes within the UN world order and within the United States. After 1965 the United States and the UN system began to diverge. The United States struggled to reconcile its commitment to the UN world order with its changes from a membership that closely supported the United States' leadership to one that viewed it with suspicion. A second imbalance that was revealed by the near Machiavellian Moment was the imbalance within the regime between the Executive and the Legislative branches of government. The simultaneous demands of war and domestic reforms increased the power of the President at the expense of the Legislative branch. The increased reliance on the president's prerogative in foreign policy threatened to undermine the Congress's ability to balance the president's power. A related problem was that Executive branch increased its power as the government's involvement in the daily life of citizens increased. The expanded Great Society required an expanded federal government and an expanded Executive power to support it and enforce it. A third imbalance revealed by the near Machiavellian Moment was the threat of corruption created by the expanded role of the government at home and abroad. The cost of the war and reforms caused the public to react. They reacted to the increased involvement of the government in everyday affairs and they reacted to the continued overseas involvement.

The change from Rusk to Kissinger can be seen in the changes in how each man viewed the United States, the World, and the United States role in the world. In the pre-Machiavellian Moment, Rusk's foreign policy embodies a belief in America's exceptionalism. He viewed the United States as country that would bring freedom to the world and uphold its principles. The

world had accepted the UN world order and the United States, as its chief architect and supporter, would bring that promise to all parts of the globe. The United States' role was to support the revolution of freedom against the forces of coercion. However, in Vietnam that beautiful vision became clouded. The war and its outcome changed the United States. The domestic realm reeling from the demands to finance the escalating war and increasing domestic reforms, rebelled against the pace of change required of them and the domestic system. The United States could not support its previous commitment to the decent world order embodied in the UN charter. As the war failed to achieve its stated purpose and the domestic reforms seemed to usher in more problems than they solved, the American public grew anxious. Was the United States unravelling? Had it reached the limits of its ability to distribute prosperity and security? Could the United States continue to support its foreign policy commitments? Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon offered answers to these questions.

In the post-Machiavellian Moment, Kissinger presented a foreign policy of limits. He set out to reassure the American public that the United States still had a mission in the world even if it was a limited one. The American public would have to be aware that the United States was an ordinary country and could not be expected to reform the world. However, even Kissinger could not find an answer to the underlying foreign policy question. How was the United States to reconcile its limited domestic political principles to its commitment to a universal world order? Even though Kissinger's foreign policy philosophy of realpolitik filled the demand for a foreign policy that reflected the limits of power, it did not address the underlying philosophical dilemma created by the universal principles bound up within the American regime. If the United States could not export its promise to the world, did that invalidate their universality?

The transformation between Rusk and Kissinger occurred because Rusk identified the United States' foreign policy with the goals of the UN system. The United States was to uphold universal principles abroad that were similar to those it espoused at home. Rusk was identifying the international system and the UN system as coterminous. Kissinger pulled back from Rusk's identification of the United States foreign policy with the UN system. He viewed the United States as a state within the international system. Moreover, he did not identify the international system and the UN system as coterminous. Kissinger tied to re-found the United States involvement by

focusing on the international balance of power and the United States' geopolitical role within the international system. Kissinger saw the United States role within the international system not within a UN system. He was not identifying the United States ideals with the international system.

The problem was that neither Rusk nor Kissinger was able to reconcile the United States with the international system. Rusk over identified the United States' interests with the UN system and viewed it as the international system. Kissinger downplayed that identification, but could not reconcile the United States' domestic universal principles to that more limited international role. At the same time as these changes were occurring, the United States and the international system were changing. The American public grew tired and anxious over the "crusade" in Vietnam and rejected Rusk's view of the United States' role in the world. The international system also changed. The Cold War rivalry became complicated by the emergence of China. In taking advantage of the international changes, Kissinger failed to appreciate fully the role of domestic ideals within the United States foreign policy. The two men and their foreign policy alternatives present the ongoing foreign policy dilemma for the United States. The United States must find a way to reconcile its domestic universal principles to an international system that does not always reflect those principles. Rusk's identification of the United States' interests with the UN system failed in Vietnam, but Kissinger's alternative of viewing the United States as an "ordinary" country within the international system did not work completely either. The near Machiavellian Moment raises two important sub-questions for the United States and its role in the world.

Within the question of Republic or Empire Rusk and the United States faced two broad questions that the thesis attempted to answer. First, how would the United States balance its limited, but universalistic, domestic political structure, a Republic, with a universalistic foreign policy? Second, how would the United States balance its foreign policy, liberal internationalism, with the international system that is not coterminous with the UN world order? The Vietnam War forced the United States to face the limits of its power to shape the international order to meet its foreign policy philosophy. The dilemma was more than a question of the limits of power; it was a question of identity. For the United States had confronted the limits of its identity as a Republic in its attempt to develop a decent world order and defend it in the jungles of South Vietnam. The war threatened the balance within the domestic regime because the foreign policy created demands that

could not be sustained by the domestic political structure within its political limits. In other words, the limited government was slowly being forced to become unlimited to support the war effort and the effort to sustain a decent world order.

Before the Vietnam War, these questions had not been a problem. The underlying tension they implied, between the United States and the international system, had been avoided. The United States' view that the UN system and the international system were coterminous was not seen as a problem. Even though the Cold War rivalry with the Soviet Union limited the system's functions, it did not hinder the United States view that its foreign policy was bound up with the UN system. As a founder and the most powerful member of the UN system, the United States faced an important question in Vietnam. In Vietnam, the United States claimed it was defending a decent world order, but that defence required it to identify the security of the world order with its own security. The United States had to determine how far it was willing to go to defend a system it had helped to found. Was it willing to transcend that system to defend it? Although this fear never materialised, the question might have become whether the United States was willing to destroy the system to save it. Although this issue never arose, it reflected the underlying international question. How would the United States relate to the UN system it had helped to found when the system did not identify the threat in the same manner as the United States?[502]

Rusk believed that the United States could sustain the world order role because he saw the domestic regime in balance with the international role. He did not see that the task could create an imbalance between the domestic regime and foreign policy as well as an imbalance between the foreign policy and the international system. The challenge of upholding a decent world order brought the United States to the limits of its foreign policy and its political regime. The effort to reform the international system, to create the decent world order, was beyond the United States' power and its political system. The effort created an imbalance within the United States' domestic structure and its foreign policy. The imbalance was worsened by the simultaneous attempt by Johnson to reform the United States' regime. The United States was being pulled in two different directions. One set of reforms was pulling the United States outward, while the other pulled it

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[502] For a good overview of the relationship between the United States and the United Nations, see Gary Ostrower, United States and the United Nations (London: Twayne, 1998).

inward. In the end, the United States was unable to reconcile its domestic regime to its foreign policy responsibility of defending a decent world order.

The imbalance between the domestic structure and the foreign policy can be seen in the tension between the Executive and the Legislative branches created by the Vietnam War. Until Vietnam, the increased presidential prerogative in foreign policy had not been a major problem. When Johnson intervened in Vietnam, the tension became a crisis. The United States' domestic balance was reacting to the increased foreign policy demands created by the war. The domestic crisis was also connected to the imbalance between the United States foreign policy and the international system. The confluence of these two crises brought the United States to a near Machiavellian Moment.

The domestic crisis developed from Johnson's attempt to undertake domestic reforms and conduct the war. The war, in particular, worsened the tension between the Executive and the Legislative branches. The Legislative branch reacted to the increased power of the Executive in foreign policy and during Nixon's term it enacted the War Powers legislation. In the language of the Machiavellian Moment, the domestic crisis reflected the potential onset of corruption within the political virtue that upholds a republic. The central government would take an increased role in the everyday life of citizens and this would undermine their capacity for self-government by making them dependent on government resources. The strong federal government, needed to carry out the reforms and conduct the war, threatened the idea of a limited republican government.

The crisis of the executive in the domestic regime was mirrored by the crisis of the United States within the international system. The two were connected by the need to have a strong executive to carry out an active foreign policy. The domestic crisis was mirrored in the international system. The United States as a founding member of the UN order was concerned that the war in Vietnam was a threat to collective security. Rusk justified the United States' involvement by arguing that universal principles similar to those of its domestic structure were under attack in South Vietnam. The United States went so far as to identify its security with the security of the world order.

Rusk identified the United States' foreign policy with UN system's goal of collective security. In Vietnam, the United States went beyond this identification when it identified its

security with the security of the world order. The consequence of this identification was a dangerous over-extension of the United States' position in Vietnam. The United States' commitments were greater than its resources. This disparity threatened to undermine the United States foreign policy and the stability of the international system. The imbalance between the foreign policy and the international system was a key problem that Rusk and Johnson left to Nixon and Kissinger.

Nixon and Kissinger responded to the crisis in foreign policy and the crisis in the international system by re-ordering United States foreign policy. This returned a measure of balance to the United States' foreign policy and to the international system. Nixon and Kissinger pursued a moderate goal that required extraordinary means. They stressed the need for the United States to find a freedom of action within a system it had created. Thus, they identified the United States as an actor within the system rather than identifying the United States with the system. The withdrawal from Vietnam was a consequence of this changed view of the United States' role in the international system. However, Nixon and Kissinger did not resolve the problem of the United States' relationship to the international system. Instead they changed its focus from reforming the system to managing it.

Kissinger reacted to the foreign policy crisis by implementing a new foreign policy philosophy. Unlike Rusk, Kissinger was not interested in reforming the international system. Instead he was interested in reforming the United States' position within the international system. The goal was to reconcile the United States to the international system by accepting that its power to change the system was limited. In the age of constraints, the United States would not be reforming the system, but trying to manage its stability. However, Kissinger's foreign policy philosophy failed to the extent that it did not relate the new role to the United States' reformist or revolutionary founding principles. Kissinger was unable to dispel the belief among the public that the United States, by giving up its universalistic foreign policy aspirations fuelled by the domestic political structure, was not invalidating those principles for the domestic regime. Thus calls for an awareness of the limits of power within foreign policy had a spill over effect on domestic opinion. The domestic opinion expressed a crisis in confidence because the belief that an unexceptional foreign policy meant an unexceptional domestic regime.

Kissinger did succeed in re-ordering foreign policy commitments and bringing a certain moderation to foreign policy, but he could not reconcile the limited foreign policy principles to the universal principles that shaped the domestic regime. The new moderation within foreign policy helped to reconcile the United States' foreign policy to the international system. However his attempts to reassure the public that the limited foreign policy did not invalidate the principles within the domestic realm were less successful. Unlike Rusk, Kissinger was unable to balance the domestic principles with foreign policy. However, Rusk, unlike Kissinger, was unable to reconcile foreign policy to the international system. The shift from Rusk to Kissinger was from one extreme to another without either fully reconciling the United States to the international system.

To be successful, the statesman must weave together the often discordant threads of domestic and international politics to create a web of politics to protect the state. For the United States that task is required at two levels. The statesman must weave the web of state at the domestic level, combining domestic policy and foreign policy, and he must balance foreign policy with the international system. These two levels must be kept in balance. When the two realms are working together the United States' security is maximised because its acts will be reinforced by the system rather than being restrained by it. In Vietnam, the system restrained the United States rather than reinforcing it. Even though the United States was, according to Dean Rusk, acting in the interest of the UN world order, the international system did not see it that way.

However, even in the role of managing stability, the temptation to overextend remained. The United States must find a way to balance its role as founder of the international system with the role of manager. As founder, the United States' identity is bound up with the international system. As manager, it acts within the system and this requires freedom of action. The problem can occur when the United States uses its freedom of action to the point where it begins to identify its interests with the system.

The United States can act outside the system for short periods of time. When it does so, the imbalance between its international role and the international system will be reflected in a developing domestic imbalance. The domestic imbalance is created by the increased need for a powerful executive in the international arena. Acting outside the system requires a strong

executive. A strong executive, needed for an active foreign policy, will have an effect on the balance of power inside the regime. A further constraint on the United States' power to act outside the system is its relationship with the system. When the United States acts with the system, its power is enhanced. When it acts outside the system, it loses that support.

As the statesman must weave together domestic and foreign policy to obtain a sustainable foreign policy, it is important to understand the domestic crisis created by the Vietnam war. Further research in this area would explore how the foreign policy crisis abroad was linked to the political crisis of liberalism at home. The thesis only touches upon the domestic context, but further research is merited. The research should explore how changes in the United States identity, changes in the domestic structure, influenced foreign policy. At the same time, one has to consider how foreign policy decisions have an effect on the domestic structure. An expansive foreign policy requires a strong executive and a strong federal government. Understanding how the domestic regime can effect foreign policy requires an understanding of liberalism within the United States. The research will have to examine how the foreign policy reflected that liberalism, and how the feedback loop brought foreign policy changes back into the domestic structure. One can consider this from the constitutional question as suggested by Silverstein's work. This method focuses more on process rather than the philosophical questions created by an expansive foreign policy. An example of how to explore the effects on liberalism when it is used to justify an expansive foreign policy is Uday Mehta's Liberalism and Empire.[503] Through his discussion of Edmund Burke, Mehta touches upon this problem. A full exploration of the problem would have to combine the theoretical problems of liberalism and foreign policy with the constitutional problems created by the need to have a powerful executive to support an active foreign policy.

The future of the United States foreign policy will rest upon how it balances its role as a founder of the UN order and as the most powerful country within that order. Supporting the UN system can help the United States manage its position indirectly and thereby avoid the internal and structural dangers created by a challenge like the Vietnam War. However, as it identifies with the UN system, the United States will be constrained by the system. Even though Kissinger spoke of

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[503] Uday Mehta, Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999)

limits, this is not what he had in mind. According to Kissinger, the restraint would be self-restraint. In his system, the United States was acting within its limits so that it could maintain freedom of action. The awareness of limits was made to help re-order foreign policy to allow it greater freedom of action. The United States was lightening its load so it could concentrate its power on more important issues. The foreign policy was designed to create stability and to manage the system, not to bring domestic principles to the international system.

The end of the Cold War presented the United States into a philosophical and political dilemma. When the Soviet Union disintegrated, the United States no longer faces a major rival who might constrain its freedom of action. At the same time, the UN system is no longer constrained by the ideological rivalry of the Cold War. The United States now confronts the choice of pursuing a foreign policy that reflects Rusk or Kissinger's foreign policy philosophy. If the United States follows Rusk's view, it would work within the UN system and emphasise the Rule of Law. This was so frequently thwarted or restrained by the ideological conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. If the United States follows Kissinger's view, it will exploit its freedom of action to shape the international system to its advantage. This would require the United States to develop concepts of legitimacy and equilibrium that reflect its interests in stability. However, the choice between the two is zero sum. Pursuing one means closing off the other. The two can be reconciled but not in their pure form. Reconciling the two will require a policy that can balance the United States' role within the system with the universal principles within its domestic regime.

What links both of these views are that they are in **balance.** There is a balance especially within the United States but also within the world order. The key necessity is moderation in both areas but immoderation when necessary. Two questions highlight the concern for understanding the international system. First, how America affirms its international role and whether it understands how closely its domestic principles are tied to the world order it has created. Second how well it understands its role in founding and maintaining the world order but at the same time remains aware that it does not do it alone. The United States is not the UN and its foreign policy acts to support an institution it helped to found. The United States is not powerful enough to substitute itself or an alliance for the system. In any international situation, therefore, the United

States must constantly work with its allies and other states sympathetic to the international system it has created. It must resist the ever-present temptation to work outside the system.

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